



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

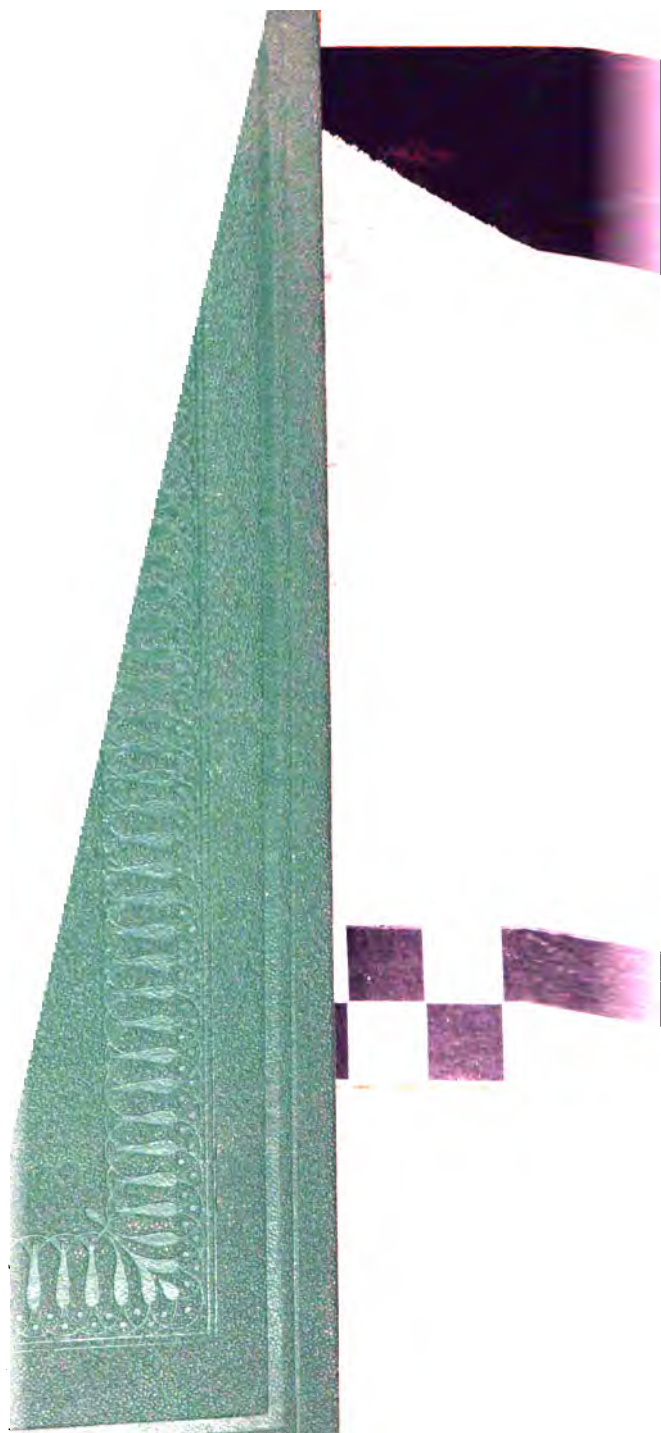
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

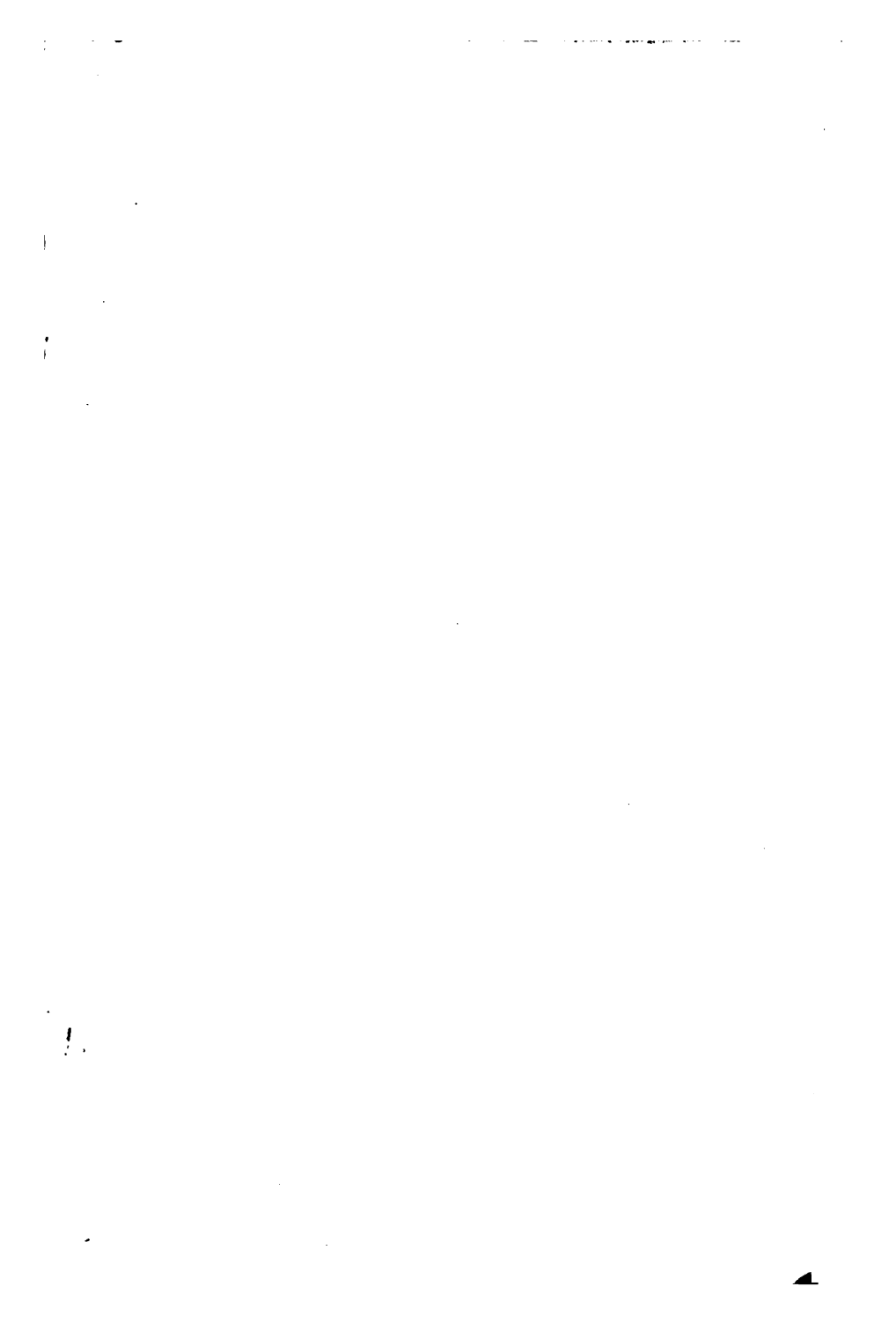
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600071869.







DAVID CHANTREY

BY

W. G. WILLS

AUTHOR OF

"THE WIFE'S EVIDENCE," "NOTICE TO QUIT,"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



LONDON

JOHN MAXWELL AND COMPANY

122 FLEET STREET

M DCCC LXV

[All rights reserved]

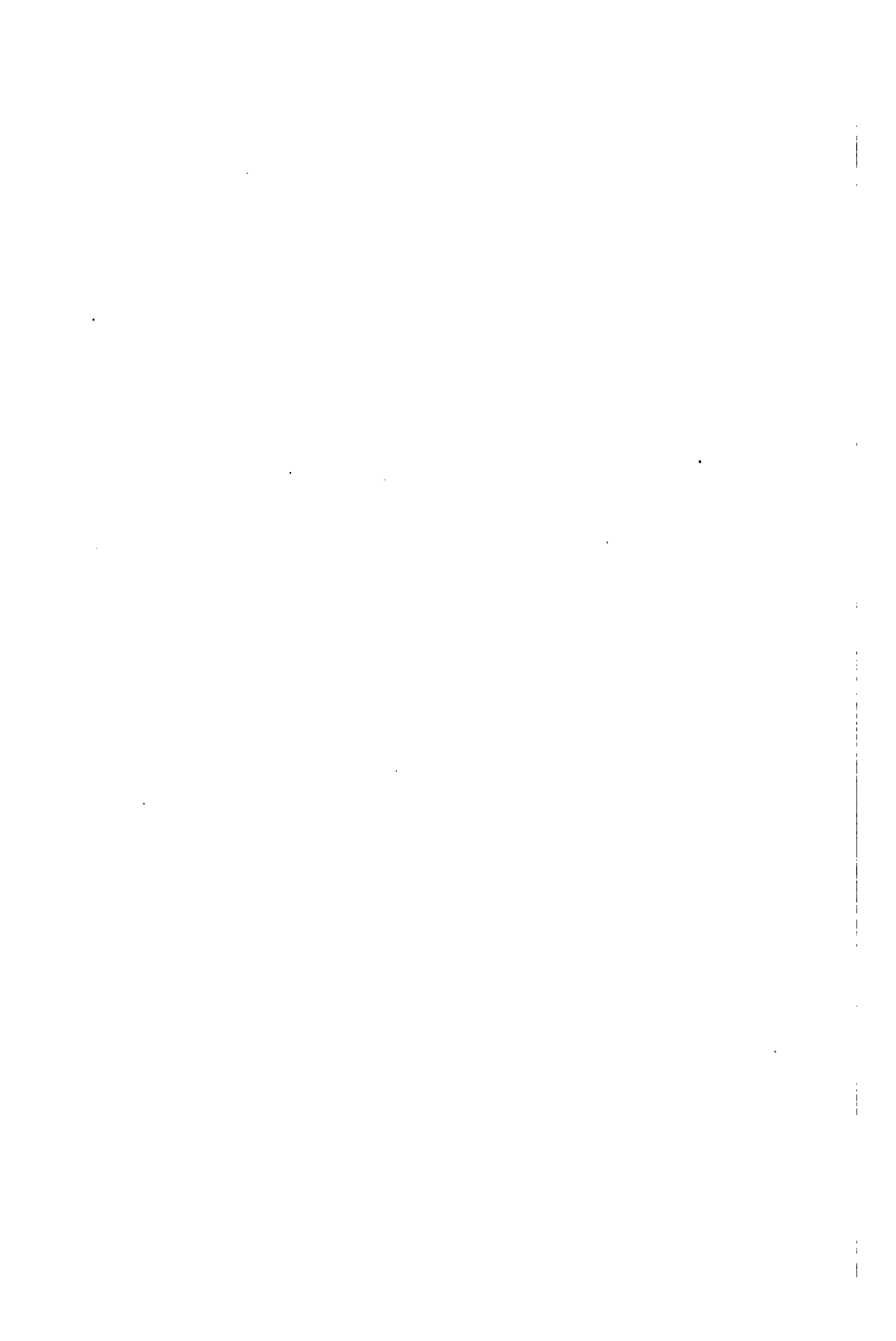
250. L. 190.

LONDON :
ROBSON AND SON, GREAT NORTHERN PRINTING WORKS,
PANCRAS ROAD, N.W.



CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE REMEDY THE LAW ALLOWS . . .	1
II. THE GREAT MRS. BLLENHEIM! . . .	26
III. TABOO	86
IV. WAITING FOR SOMEBODY. THE BLOOD OF THE HOWARDS	131
V. POOR LITTLE MRS. BLLENHEIM . . .	149
VI. TWO BIRDS IN THE BUSH	163
VII. MONTAGUE AND CAPULET	190
VIII. MERLIN'S WAND	210
IX. FORGIVENESS	243
X. CONCLUSION	273



DAVID CHANTREY.

CHAPTER I.

THE REMEDY THE LAW ALLOWS.

WITH a stern restraint Wayre first satisfied himself how this man Chantrey came to be on terms of acquaintance with his family ; and his cup of mortification was not full till he had heard that his enemy was not only an acquaintance, but in the positive position of a friend to both Emmie and Milly. Then, with pardonable bitterness, he gave them a short account of what he had suffered at their friend's hands.

“ To find this ruffian,” said he, “ comfortably installed here as a friend and guest !”

And then there fell a stony silence upon them

all ; and that broke up into exclamations of pained surprise.

Mr. Wertley had next to be told ; and the old gentleman was considerably agitated and upset by the whole scene, happening, as it did, while his mind was placidly set upon his dinner.

He was liable to sudden fits of faintness when suddenly alarmed or vexed. He grew very pale, and subsided into a chair whilst Emmie bathed his forehead and temples with *eau-de-cologne*. For the present the matter was hushed up, and Chantrey's name was banished from the lips of all.

"For heaven's sake, let's have our dinner," at last said the old gentleman, rather petulantly. But just as he rose to ring the bell, Major de Lindesey was announced. Before Milly could escape—before Wayre could suggest the obvious excuse to fluttered old Wertley, the Major followed the announcement straight into the parlour where the party were assembled. Mr. Wertley received him most hospitably, and was perverse enough to the general wishes to ask him to dine. "We have a vacant chair," he said ; "and it is

no disparagement to you, Major, to say I am very sorry for it."

The Major shook hands with Emmie, bowed rather coldly to Wayre, and, approaching Milly very respectfully, offered his hand, with some murmured congratulations or good wishes, and a kind inquiry after her mother: then turning to old Wertley, he told him that he in part understood what had happened, and he apologised for coming at such an hour, and utterly refused to remain. In fact, the Major behaved with the most gentlemanly forbearance and delicacy in a position which was somewhat testing.

As he was going out he turned, and with a little becoming hesitation related to Mr. Wertley how he had found Chantrey lying at the gate senseless and bleeding—in a most piteous condition. He worked up the whole account as he proceeded, and baited it so as to catch the ladies' compassion.

"You don't mean to say," cried poor worried old Wertley, who was destined not to eat his dinner in peace, "that he's lying there now!"

"Oh dear! I'll get my bonnet; we must bring some bandages and wine," said Emmie, oblivious or regardless for the moment of the unpardonable offence committed by the sufferer; but her brother laid his hand on her arm.

"You need not trouble yourself, Miss Wertley," said Major de Lindesey; "I respect you for your good nature. But I helped Mr. Chantrey up, and he is at home, I hope, by this, poor fellow!"

After thus creating a sort of favourable reaction, for the time at least, towards Chantrey, the Major took his leave—standing higher in the opinion of my readers, I should hope. Here has the Major been serving a man behind his back who half an hour before indignantly cast him off and turned his back on him. "Good for evil," is the Major's motto to-day. But Mephisto smiles, and suggests to us maliciously that there might be another little motive more akin to the Major's cast of mind. The pity of the relenting ladies was obviously most tormenting to Mr. Wayre, and Mr. Wayre's torment might gratify the Major.

Such an explanation, however, no generous mind could adopt.

Dinner was served at last, and was by no means a social meal. The two girls petted and officiously comforted the crestfallen barrister, and Mr. Wertley was silent and disconcerted. It was not indeed until the cloth was removed, and he had, at Emmie's instance, taken a few glasses of wine, contrary to his temperate wont, that he revived, and felt able to entertain his step-son. When the ladies had left the room, he grew a little loquacious, and endeavoured good-naturedly to rouse his guest from his moodiness.

It was quite apparent that he felt himself called upon to sympathise, and, indeed, that he was so disposed. He started very fairly by calling upon his young relative to cheer up. Good men and true had been obliged to succumb before such assaults. There was no need to take the matter so morosely.

"To tell you the truth, sir," said Wayre, "I would rather avoid the subject. The whole affair is distressing to the last degree—both the indig-

nity I have been exposed to, and the consequences it entails upon me, which I will not shrink from."

"But is the indignity of so grievous a character, my boy?" said the inveterate old gentleman, the gentle antagonism of his intellectual organisation arising, and overcoming his instinctive sympathy. "If he administered his physical castigation to your back, you whipped him morally and soundly in your review, my boy. There's your consolation. Further, your moral castigation, my boy, has no doubt been wholesome to him—cooled down his extravagant estimate of his gracious mother's book; while, on the other hand, taken in a philosophic frame of mind, why should not you derive some indirect benefit—"

"Benefit?" said Wayre, sternly.

"Positive *direct* benefit from the whipping," said gentle old Wertley. His gaze was as soft as a dove's while he reasoned on: "The best of us, Johnny, my boy, have a mettlesome, graceless little nag capering under 'em, which we may call self-conceit; and the hand which on due occasions

chastises it, my boy, that sprinkles some cool drops on its skipping spirit, is the hand of a benefactor. The feelings of a philosopher might almost approach gratitude. It depends upon the frame of mind in which you take your flogging. Now, the little lad at school, it is beyond question, derives considerable advantage from a good birching; and I have often thought, from my long experience and observation of life, that what is good for the boy would very often be good for the man, if only the dose were in proportion."

The form which Mr. Wertley's consolation took here was so grotesque, that really to meet it either with good humour or anger was equally undignified.

"My dear sir," said John coolly, "don't you think we might change a sore subject? It is neither amusing nor profitable."

We have learned ere now that Mr. Wayre had considerable self-restraint, but for all that this placid application of caustic made him wince; he shoved his chair from the table, and taking out a letter, affected to read it.

nity I have been exposed to, and the consequences it entails upon me, which I will not shrink from."

"But is the indignity of so grievous a character, my boy?" said the inveterate old gentleman, the gentle antagonism of his intellectual organisation arising, and overcoming his instinctive sympathy. "If he administered his physical castigation to your back, you whipped him morally and soundly in your review, my boy. There's your consolation. Further, your moral castigation, my boy, has no doubt been wholesome to him—cooled down his extravagant estimate of his gracious mother's book; while, on the other hand, taken in a philosophic frame of mind, why should not you derive some indirect benefit—"

"Benefit?" said Wayre, sternly.

"Positive *direct* benefit from the whipping," said gentle old Wertley. His gaze was as soft as a dove's while he reasoned on: "The best of us, Johnny, my boy, have a mettlesome, graceless little nag capering under 'em, which we may call self-conceit; and the hand which on due occasions

chastises it, my boy, that sprinkles some cool drops on its skipping spirit, is the hand of a benefactor. The feelings of a philosopher might almost approach gratitude. It depends upon the frame of mind in which you take your flogging. Now, the little lad at school, it is beyond question, derives considerable advantage from a good birching; and I have often thought, from my long experience and observation of life, that what is good for the boy would very often be good for the man, if only the dose were in proportion."

The form which Mr. Wertley's consolation took here was so grotesque, that really to meet it either with good humour or anger was equally undignified.

"My dear sir," said John coolly, "don't you think we might change a sore subject? It is neither amusing nor profitable."

We have learned ere now that Mr. Wayre had considerable self-restraint, but for all that this placid application of caustic made him wince; he shoved his chair from the table, and taking out a letter, affected to read it.

nity I have been exposed to, and the consequences it entails upon me, which I will not shrink from."

"But is the indignity of so grievous a character, my boy?" said the inveterate old gentleman, the gentle antagonism of his intellectual organisation arising, and overcoming his instinctive sympathy. "If he administered his physical castigation to your back, you whipped him morally and soundly in your review, my boy. There's your consolation. Further, your moral castigation, my boy, has no doubt been wholesome to him—cooled down his extravagant estimate of his gracious mother's book; while, on the other hand, taken in a philosophic frame of mind, why should not you derive some indirect benefit—"

"Benefit?" said Wayre, sternly.

"Positive *direct* benefit from the whipping," said gentle old Wertley. His gaze was as soft as a dove's while he reasoned on: "The best of us, Johnny, my boy, have a mettlesome, graceless little nag capering under 'em, which we may call self-conceit; and the hand which on due occasions

chastises it, my boy, that sprinkles some cool drops on its skipping spirit, is the hand of a benefactor. The feelings of a philosopher might almost approach gratitude. It depends upon the frame of mind in which you take your flogging. Now, the little lad at school, it is beyond question, derives considerable advantage from a good birching; and I have often thought, from my long experience and observation of life, that what is good for the boy would very often be good for the man, if only the dose were in proportion."

The form which Mr. Wertley's consolation took here was so grotesque, that really to meet it either with good humour or anger was equally undignified.

"My dear sir," said John coolly, "don't you think we might change a sore subject? It is neither amusing nor profitable."

We have learned ere now that Mr. Wayre had considerable self-restraint, but for all that this placid application of caustic made him wince; he shoved his chair from the table, and taking out a letter, affected to read it.

nity I have been exposed to, and the consequences it entails upon me, which I will not shrink from."

"But is the indignity of so grievous a character, my boy?" said the inveterate old gentleman, the gentle antagonism of his intellectual organisation arising, and overcoming his instinctive sympathy. "If he administered his physical castigation to your back, you whipped him morally and soundly in your review, my boy. There's your consolation. Further, your moral castigation, my boy, has no doubt been wholesome to him—cooled down his extravagant estimate of his gracious mother's book; while, on the other hand, taken in a philosophic frame of mind, why should not you derive some indirect benefit—"

"Benefit?" said Wayre, sternly.

"Positive *direct* benefit from the whipping," said gentle old Wertley. His gaze was as soft as a dove's while he reasoned on: "The best of us, Johnny, my boy, have a mettlesome, graceless little nag capering under 'em, which we may call self-conceit; and the hand which on due occasions

chastises it, my boy, that sprinkles some cool drops on its skipping spirit, is the hand of a benefactor. The feelings of a philosopher might almost approach gratitude. It depends upon the frame of mind in which you take your flogging. Now, the little lad at school, it is beyond question, derives considerable advantage from a good birching; and I have often thought, from my long experience and observation of life, that what is good for the boy would very often be good for the man, if only the dose were in proportion."

The form which Mr. Wertley's consolation took here was so grotesque, that really to meet it either with good humour or anger was equally undignified.

"My dear sir," said John coolly, "don't you think we might change a sore subject? It is neither amusing nor profitable."

We have learned ere now that Mr. Wayre had considerable self-restraint, but for all that this placid application of caustic made him wince; he shoved his chair from the table, and taking out a letter, affected to read it.

“Ay, I see it annoys you, Johnny, and I will not pursue it; but, Lord, man, you, a well-read scholar, can call up a host of honoured precedents to countenance you. What is a whipping, after all, but a most honourable penance submitted to by kings? There was Henry the Second found a flogging very comfortable to his royal and pride-blown spirit, if not to his anointed back, when he was well flagellated by a monk at Becket’s grave. ’Pon my word there is a very fine parallel here, considering that this novel was a posthumous work—eh! d’ye see it, my boy? There again was Johannes Fœdissimus the hermit, which may be translated as dirty John, who used of his own free will to stand barebacked in the market-place presenting a flagellum to the passers-by, and beseeching to be whipped. There was the pious usurer Ærarius Spercus in the year 1100, who retained a special whipster to strap him well for any more than ordinarily heinous swindle; not to speak of Louis the Eleventh and his lashes in private, which he found a sort of counter-irritation to the scourging of conscience within. Why,

whole whipping-parties used to issue forth jubilantly in the Middle Ages, and, in files of alternate lady and gentleman, thong one another to the tune of hymns and pæans. But we have modern instances of philosophy under the lash. Take the instance which occurred at Lloyd's only the other day: there was —— who publicly insulted —— in the coffee-room; why, *he* took his horsewhipping coolly sitting on his own office-stool."

"This is intolerable!" cried John, starting up outraged from the table, and walking out of the room in the middle of poor old Wertley's learned lecture, which now shall never be finished.

In a minute after old Wertley was repentant, and saw his cruelty. He went to the drawing-room to make friends, but no one was there. The fact was, a committee was sitting up in Emma's bedroom, consisting of Milly and Emma and her brother. He had just signified his intention of taking the only course open to him,—and we have no hesitation in saying the manly and proper one,—namely, to summon Mr. David Chantrey before

the police-magistrate, and prosecute him before all the world for assault. The ladies, however, did not seem to take the same view of the matter as do we and Mr. Wayre.

Milly was pleading with him with an earnestness quite foreign to her. "You know how shocked and indignant we are at his conduct; Emmie has been crying here, and I could not comfort her. We have only one feeling about the whole thing, and that is your own; but indeed there is no need of this exposure; do not, John, bring this wretched business into the papers."

"It would be so painful for us all, Johnny," pleaded Emma. "Pray do not."

"It is all asleep and forgotten by this," pleaded Milly.

"You know that Milly and I must suffer as well as Mr. Chantrey by this publicity, if it was only from our affection and sympathy for you," pleaded Emma. "It is for your sake, Johnny, I beg of you not."

"For my *own* sake I object to it," pleaded

Milly, clinching all the arguments, and for the moment bewildering poor Wayre. But the man was of a quiet resolute nature, and what he deliberately willed he was apt to perform.

“ You don’t know how you have pained me by those last words,” said he, with his hand pressed upon hers; “ but I feel this to be my duty, and at all sacrifices I must go through with it. It would be monstrous,” he said hotly, “ that such a brutal assault should pass with impunity; it would be mean and cowardly; it would place a stigma of cowardice upon me which I could never efface. It’s a mistake to think that such a business as that could sleep; if it was only this fellow’s boasting tongue, it will get about; and might ruin me if I don’t take the manly open course the law directs. These are not the days when a man may clear his reputation for spirit by a pistol-shot. There is but one course, a duty to myself and a duty to the public; which if I shrink from, I deserve to be a mark for every cowardly street-ruffian who chooses to take advantage of physical superiority.”

“ But this attack was not suffered by you with

impunity," said deep Milly, knowing well how manhood must writhe to talk as he forced himself to talk to them. With womanly tact she slipped in consoling flattery: "I saw a mark on his forehead; you made a good fight, and gave as good as you got."

He stripped off one sleeve of his coat and bared his arm to them. At the sight Emma groaned aloud; from the shoulder to the elbow was one tract of swollen wales.

"I don't show it," said he, "to excite your pity, or to shock you. It is my shortest argument. That is a little too much to suffer in silence." He put on his coat.

"It is very shocking; but the exposure in the papers is worse," said Milly.

Emma was silent; and her brother, rising, proposed they should go out for a stroll and talk of something pleasanter; the subject was then dropped by common consent, save for a little pleading whisper from Milly, as she was driving back to town at night—"For my sake."

Mr. Wayre was as good as his word, and

made no delay. The summons was served upon David; and the latter attended at the Bow-Street Police-Court to answer the charge of assault.

Mr. Wayre stated his case himself without the slightest heat or impetuosity, and David acknowledged the truth of his statement. Upon which the magistrate felt himself called upon to express a very indignant censure upon the defendant's conduct, which he stigmatised as cowardly, unmanly, and brutal. It was monstrous, he said, that a literary gentleman could not conscientiously express his convictions without the liability of a bully entering his private rooms and assaulting him with inhuman brutality. His worship would inflict the heaviest fine permitted him by the law, and was very doubtful whether he ought not to substitute imprisonment. Defendant was fined five pounds.

Then David lifted his hanging head, and spoke up before the whole court. "Your worship has spoken harshly, and the excuse for my conduct could find no place here; but I take this occasion to apologise to Mr. Wayre for my unjustifiable

violence; and to say that, so far as concerns that act, and that alone, it reflects shame upon me, not upon him."

The apology was received with some little applause by the few respectable people present, and David paid the fine, and was discharged.

He was flushed and downcast throughout the proceedings; the situation abased his pride. He who could carry round circulars and a subscription-list to all his mother's friends, without the slightest sense of humiliation, keenly felt the situation which his own outrageous act had placed him in, and the public rebuke to which he was subjected.

As he was going up Fetter Lane towards Holborn, he was followed and shouted after by some boys and roughs who had heard the case; and a pleasing little incident took place, which we may passingly relate.

A great ill-looking fellow in a barragon coat pressed upon Chantrey's rear, as the bully of the party, with insulting banter.

"I say, big un', you wouldn't fight your

weight, would ye? Why, what a bullock ye are! What a beast ye are, a wallop in' that little cove! Arn't ye a beast? 'Twould serve you right to get a —— good hiding!"

"You're a big un'," said David, turning on him, and fetching him a tremendous open-handed slap on his dissolute cheek; "how do you feel now?"

To this kind and considerate inquiry the "big un'" did not seem inclined to reply. He was astonished; and staggered away, half-across the street, with his hand to his face. The attack was too sudden and vigorous for his comprehension; had he been worked up to fighting-point, by a due amount of scurrility, and doubling of his fists, and feints to pull off his barragon coat, he might have ultimately shown English pluck, and taken any amount of punishment; nay, the cad might have beaten the gentleman; but he was not prepared for a deafening shock on the left ear in the mere opening play of the quarrel, and he reeled away to reflect upon it. Meantime David increased his speed; and meeting a Hampstead 'bus,

he got inside from the rain. As David sat in the omnibus, with a prospect before him of wet pavement and a general dismal flashing of oil-clothes and umbrellas outside wherever he cast his eyes, he found himself in abject spirits. It was not his nature to fret; and he had not, consequently, that moral discipline which older and careworn men acquire—by which, when the drowning tidewave of sorrow comes, they can rise above it, not by natural buoyancy, but by a well-timed struggle. He sank under the unwonted accumulation of shameful exposure in a low police-court, sickness at home, disappointed love,—a serious item of misfortune at four-and-twenty,—and slack work, which causeth an empty pocket! O worst of ills, from four-and-twenty down to threescore and ten! He had pawned some small valuables to make up the money to pay down in court. He had paid in another instalment to Mrs. Blenheim with all the punctuality of a high-mettled pride, which would have driven him to live on bread-and-water rather than fail when his honour had been plighted. In these matters he had a boundless

pride, as tyrannic as Don Quixote's insanity. By turns he was assailed by these many cares, and each trampled over his spirits; and then, like the great ninth wave at sea, they would seem to combine, and rush on him together, shapeless and vague, as he sat in that omnibus, packed in between a snuffing old lady and cross little old gentleman whose corns he had stood upon in getting in. That pretty kaleidoscope—a young man's love—was smashed to atoms, hopelessly and irretrievably; he may never again turn it before his eyes into a thousand shapes, all beautiful and new. Since he had been caught with it first, he had purified his heart and mind, and foregone manhood's sins; cast from him all the license and snares of youth, and wholly clung to those aspirations and hopes which old hearts cannot feel, which, though earthly and delusive, old hearts must envy; all these had deserted him, and left with him prospects as dismal as the realities around him,—the wet pavement, the snuffing old lady, and little old man with the corns.

“No room inside,” said the conductor, in his
VOL. III.

hard croaking tone, to some dripping applicant at the step.

A thin and wretched face, surmounted by a broken hat, peered wistfully in. "There *is* room for one, conductor."

"There ain't. Get a-top, my man; you can't stand there."

"I'm ready to pay. I'm cold and wet, and there is a vacant place."

"No, there ain't!" cried the snuffling old lady—"the idear! We're quite full inside."

"There's no room, sir," said the little gentleman with the corns; "don't be delaying the 'bus."

"Come, get up or down! You ain't an ornament, wherever ye perch."

"It's not just!" said the ragged fellow, stepping back into the rain, with a cough; and at this moment a highly-respectable portly gentleman coming up was let inside by the conductor to the vacant seat.

"There's no room now, anyhow. All right!" cried the conductor, striking the signal to the coachman, and winking at the passengers.

“Stop! let me out!” said David, rising.

The conductor opened the door. David stepped out, and beckoned to the shivering scarecrow.

“Get in, sir,” he said. “There’s a vacant seat yet, and you’ve a right to ride inside.”

He put his hand on the poor man’s shoulder, and pushed him securely in. Then he climbed to the top himself, heedless of the grumblings beneath him, and rode in the rain to his journey’s end.

For this piece of Quixotism we can only seek an explanation in a morbid and prostrate state of mind. It was an act quite beyond the comprehension of the conductor, the passenger, the chronicler, or the reader.

He had just got down, when his eye was caught by a well-known object,—the Wertley’s ponyphaeton filled with cloaks and wrappings; and, before he could look round, his elbow was caught by old Wertley, who looked up at him with a most friendly smile.

“I’m *very* glad to see you,” he said *sotto voce*; “*very* glad to see you—in spite of the ladies. I’m your friend, Chantrey. Wait till I get the ladies

into the phaeton, and I'll talk to you. *Very* glad to see you, Chantrey!"

Out stepped a thin old lady first, whom Chantrey did not recognise, and whom Mr. Wertley addressed as Miss Brown. Next came Emmie. She had actually been in the omnibus with him all the way, sitting on the same seat with him, and he had not seen her in his abstraction. They say there are secret sympathies between lovers; that Fred in the church-gallery, gazing down earnestly at Louie's bonnet in the church-aisle, will draw her eyes upon him by some secret sympathy. But how like an utter and cold estrangement was it that these two should be sitting for this half-hour in the same 'bus, and the gentleman feel no peculiar sensation or thrill!

David looked in her face for one glance of recognition; but she never glanced at him. Her eyes, however, were too consciously averted from his direction to admit of the hope that she had not seen him.

Old Wertley paid the conductor his fares, and then hurried after the two ladies. He wrapped

them up securely, and despatched them in the phaeton home. Then he returned to Chantrey's side, and, lifting his umbrella over that gentleman's towering person, he repeated his cordial assurances of friendship.

"Come up to the house with me, and I'll make a treaty for you with my girl. She told me just now to ask, *from myself*, after your little sister; and Mrs. Brown begs, strictly *through me*, that you would change your wet clothes. Ha, ha, ha! come up, and we'll make it all right."

David allowed himself to be led along, overcome by a temptation to see her and speak with her again, on whatever terms it might be. He knew pretty clearly what she felt. He did not anticipate a pardon; but he could not forbear hoping for some sign of forgiveness, hankering after some chance interview, doubting how she might have judged, and what expected of him. It was better to end all doubts at once.

"Stay here," said Wertley, when they had arrived in the hall.

And, like a good and brave knight, David

stood there by the wet cloaks and umbrellas, feeling his heart swelling and swelling by anticipation of some approaching trial which would wrench him sorely. He heard a light step, and in a second Emmie stood before him; but no sooner did she see him than she started and made a show of retreat.

“Your father brought me here,” said David; “and I think I am right to come, that I may express to you my deep sorrow for the pain I have caused you. I acted in perfect blindness; and though I quite feel our intimacy must cease, I hope you will be just, Miss Wertley.”

She had turned when he spoke, and she heard him out; but she was not like the Emmie he used to know: she was some icy stranger, who only seemed to tarry that she might wound.

He had a confused, a shamefaced sense of intrusion, and a despair that any thing he could ever do or say could bridge the gulf that had sunk between them. He was bound as a gentleman not to keep her standing there in her frigid courtesy.

“I did not expect you would come here. My

brother showed me his poor bruised arm ; and even if he were a stranger, it was a sight I can never forget," said she, with a slight shudder ; " but I love no one as I do him."

" Perhaps, then, it was as well I came," said David, manfully dispensing with pathos or supplication. " I only imagined how you felt ; but now I know it. It would be untrue to say, Miss Wertley, that I forgive your brother. The injury he did was not to me, but to that poor motherless child. Yet he acted blindly in injuring her, as I did in injuring you. I have been far more to blame than he : that I shall always say and feel ; so you are justified in meeting me as you do."

So far all very well ; now for feminine cruelty. The kindest woman has her ruthless moment, a cruel drop in her blood.

" I have to ask you, Mr. Chantrey, as a gentleman, that you would kindly not come here till after next week ; I shall then have left home," said Emmie, with a killing politeness, and an aversion harder to bear from its reserve.

Whilst she was speaking she never looked in

his face. Now had she only got into a glorious passion of reproaches, or given the slightest volcanic hint of feeling, the case had not been half so desperate ; but the utter estrangement of her expression and attitude forbade any hope of reconciliation, and froze all impulses of repentance and baffled love.

Circumstances had always thrown such a kind and coaxing complexion over all her acts and words towards him, that now he scarcely knew her. Was this the pretty smiling lady who used absolutely to wait upon him at table like a zealous handmaiden, watching his plate and glass with such pretty hospitality?—she who used to open the hall-door for him, recognising his knock, and meet him with open hand ; then, before he could prevent her, bring him a chair, and question him with such quaint friendliness about his father and her “little patient.” Here she stood, colder and more distant than the first moment they met ; here she stood, killingly polite, with an expression of positive aversion on her cold downcast face.

All David’s pleadings, explanations, and re-

grets vanished from his memory. He said in haste and with enforced coolness, "It is quite natural, Miss Wertley, you should resent my conduct, which is not to be excused. I am placed in a very hard position, and I hope you will allow for it. To you I cannot apologise; for knowingly or wilfully I have never done you harm. I must not tell you how sorry I am; for it would be nothing to the purpose now. I have lost all my friends. You think you were quite mistaken in me, I can see. But if you think I am capable of taking the slightest advantage of our past friendship or your father's unchanged feelings, you are mistaken in me indeed. From this hour you shall be as free from intrusion as if I were in my grave. God bless you for your kindness to my poor little sister!—her mother would thank you better than I can if she were here."

He never offered her his hand, conscious of the hopeless gulf between them; but turned immediately and went away.

CHAPTER. II.

THE GREAT MRS. BLENHEIM !

SIR HUGH ROWLY was introduced to Milly, and placed at her side with a wave, as it were, of Mrs. Blenheim's wand. He was left alone with her; he a gallant and susceptible little youth of forty-three, and she a perfect vision of striped-silk and lace.

Sir Hugh was formed by nature to please ladies: he was so trim, so highly manufactured, so alert, so complimentary, so wealthy, and a bachelor,—all that could be desired. He beamed upon Milly with all the ease and self-complacency of nine thousand a-year and untrammelled old bachelorhood.

“What a charming woman is your mother !” he said.

“Do you not think so?” replied Milly. “I am very proud of her.”

"Perfectly fascinating eye! So youthful!—why, she might be your elder sister."

"So every body says," responded Milly, pleased.

"It was so nice of her to call upon Miss Masterton; so good, so like her face, in fact, to do it," said Sir Hugh, patting the back of a chair. "I should know your mother was a good woman if it were only—you will laugh at me, perhaps—if it were only by her tone of voice and that beautiful beseeching eye. She is the very counterpart of my Saint Cecilia."

Milly did not laugh at him; she grew perfectly frigid. It was not like prudery—it was deliberate rebuke of manner. When a beaming old bachelor begins to harp upon a lady's eyes, he is not to be trusted with the topic.

"You have come from the Mastertons," said she, turning the subject. "Do you think Madeline handsome?"

"Not if the old proverb be true. However, we may say, 'Handsome is that naughty does' with more truth talking of the ladies, I am afraid."

"You have a good opinion of us," said Milly, with a little curl on her lip.

"Opinion is one thing," said the elderly little Adonis. "I am, in effect, their humble slave;" and he bowed over his gold snuff-box. "Miss Masterton is a splendid creature; indeed, she has but one fault—a serious one in a lady? she is not fond of—" He completed his sentence by rubbing his delicate hands together as if washing them, and shaking his head in playful horror. "And as to her studio: oh, dear! I never venture to look around me; the crookedness, the mess! It really grieves me; for, take Madeline Masterton all in all, *she is a splendid* creature—a glorious instrument just a little out of tune."

"Very much out of tune," said Mrs. Blenheim promptly, having just then entered the room.

Sir Hugh rose and threatened to take to flight; he begged Mrs. Blenheim not to press him, as he was weak—very weak. He hoped to see the ladies at his place to show them his pictures, and desired to appoint a day.

Mrs. Blenheim had resolved to hold him. She first assured him that lunch was on the table, and he must have a glass of wine at least. But no; he had promised to return to the Mastertons: he thought a drive in the Park would do that poor girl good.

"Do not smile so wickedly," he said; "her papa always comes with us."

"*She* would not insist upon that, I daresay," said Mrs. Blenheim, resolved to keep him, no matter how she limed the twig.

"We must have charity, Mrs. Blenheim," he smiled. "Madeline Masterton has not a charming kind mother, as Miss Blenheim has, to advise and restrain her; she has instead a 'swell' papa." He waved his outspread hands over his shirt-front, as though it was beginning to puff, and he threw back the lappels of his coat.

"I am sorry to say, Sir Hugh, she is very much talked about; you will get quite a reputation by being seen with her. I called there this morning just to—"

"You did indeed, Mrs. Blenheim! And to

that chance I owe this pleasure." He bowed over his snuff-box.

"I can assure you she was very rude. I shall never call again."

"Well, well—she is rude to me. All you ladies are very hard upon her, and we must pardon a little temper. It is really a dooty as much as a pleasure to hover about her," smiled Sir Hugh. It was a heavenly smile.

"The innocent!" thought Mrs. Blenheim; "almost *too* good."

"She needs advice from such as you," said he; now you could counsel and sympathise. I should know it by the very tones of your voice and by your eye—hem!"

Mrs. Blenheim smiled at Milly, in playful resignation to the compliment, and cheerful scepticism as to its sincerity.

"Really," said she, "Miss Masterton is quite above or below advice. The girl is bewitched; the girl is infatuated about Major de Lindesey, and we all know he is only amusing himself."

"Then her friends must rally round her, Mrs.

Blenheim," said Sir Hugh, taking a very lofty moral attitude and a determined pinch of snuff; "we must not allow a little heedless temper or a few thoughtless words to interfere with the dooty we owe to a motherless young creature of such brilliant gifts; nor shall we, Mrs. Blenheim!" He took up his hat.

"She certainly appears very fond of you, Sir Hugh. If you only heard the pretty pet names she has for you!"

"Pet names—eh? Ah!"

"Of course you are aware of it?"

"I cannot say I am," said Sir Hugh perplexed.

"You will be amused to hear it, then. I couldn't think who she meant at first; it is so playful; she calls you Roly-Poly!"

"Roly—ha! ha!" laughed the plump little baronet; a dry little laugh, which was not quite in keeping with his features, which were pinched and stern for the moment. "Of course she is very welcome. How amusing! Roly-Poly—ah! ah!"

Strange to say, he seemed to dawdle, and forget to go. He lunched with Mrs. Blenheim; and Miss Masterton's name died off from his lips; in fact, he seemed to have quite forgotten his benevolent intentions about the airing in the Park.

Poor little human nature!—we should blush for it even when it apes divinity. Sir Hugh could find it in his benevolent heart to forgive Miss Masterton's sins against society, her rudeness to Mrs. Blenheim, her slovenliness; nay, he could rise above jealousy, with a supreme belief in his own worth and attractions; but—"Roly-Poly!" There is nothing in the words—no charge conveyed in them; they were even uttered in a soft and kindly mood; but—"Roly-Poly!" it was unpardonable. Whether it was Sir Peter Lely, or the pretty Milly, or the charming widow which furnished the bait to dainty Sir Hugh, is a question we can decide for ourselves; but Sir Hugh began to frequent Bedford Square; and though there were signs and tokens of temperament which no anxious mother could look on without misgiving, such as his amazing punctu-

ality, his scrutinising eye, which was agonised by a fold in the tablecloth or a picture hung awry, and his inimitable good cheer, yet Mrs. Blenheim was conscious that she had one hook in his gill, and she held him by it.

Milly and she of course paid him a visit, by express invitation, at his handsome place on the Thames. There, among the flowery terraces, the garden statuettes and vases, the hothouses, picture-galleries, and rosewood furniture, Sir Hugh was in full feather; his perennial smiles gleamed up and down—warmed with genuine hospitality; his step was almost Terpsichorean—tripping hither and thither with the charming widow; lecturing upon his pictures over his gold snuff-box with a pert confidence which carried belief. *All* his pictures were originals—at least he vowed they were; and to deny it were insult.

He brought Mrs. Blenheim up to the picture of St. Cecilia, and appealed to Milly if there was not a striking likeness to her mother.

“The same glorious eyes! Pardon me, Mrs. Blenheim!”

Mrs. Blenheim lifted her brows, and smiled archly at Milly.

“My glorious eyes! Let me put a pair of spectacles on them.” She took a very sensible silver pair from her pocket. Having deliberately put them upon her pretty nose, she inspected the picture, and pronounced it beautiful—evidently an original—so mellow, quite divine.

Sir Hugh’s cormorant pride as a collector having been thus appeased, he rallied her upon praising the very portrait of herself.

“I don’t see the gray hair and the wrinkles, Sir Hugh.”

“The dimples, Mrs. Blenheim—the *dimples*,” said Sir Hugh, bowing.

“Milly love, don’t forget,” said Mrs. Blenheim; “we must buy a saucy little hat and feather which might suit a nymph like your mother, and a nice juvenile muslin—”

“Let it be short,” said Sir Hugh, bowing.

Here Milly suddenly and unaccountably turned cross, and looking at her watch, declared it was time to go.

She would take no further interest in Sir Hugh or his whole establishment ; she was even so absurd as to walk persistently between her mother and Sir Hugh.

Can any lady explain this conduct ? I will not take a man's opinion upon it.

Before his guests departed, Sir Hugh ordered one of his footmen to make up the cage containing his fine gray-and-vermilion parrot for a journey, and most pathetically entreated Mrs. Blenheim to take the bird home for a month or so, that—it might catch her voice !

Mrs. Blenheim graciously acceded. She was temporising, and the concession was obviously good policy. The cage was placed therefore in her low brougham, with a large orange-silk handkerchief over the wire.

“What a charming little woman !” murmured Sir Hugh contemplatively, as his guests drove away.

“The innocent creature !” laughed Mrs. Blenheim ; “why should you be so angry with him, love ? You must really undertake the bird's edu-

cation—quite too much responsibility for a nymph like me.”

“I will,” said Milly spitefully; “and I’ll teach him to say ‘Old Fop!’ Upon my word, mamma, I never met such a *disgusting*, forward little creature, as you call him.”

“Poor Roly Poly! But did you ever see such a lovely little place?” said her mother. “Oh, Milly, if I could but see you mistress there!”

“I think I should poison the odious little wretch before a week.”

When next Sir Hugh appeared at Bedford Square he met Mr. Wayre; and Mrs. Blenheim allowed him to see the lovers sitting together in the parlour and looking so innocent and happy. It was a sight to tantalise the toughest heart to see the favourite holding Milly’s hand, and looking round forbiddingly at Sir Hugh for his intrusion—like the hunter defending his wife from the panther.

Sir Hugh came upon them, however, bright and brisk, with the most profane disregard of the sanctity of such an hour. He spoke of his pic-

tures, his little Rembrandt and his great Rubens, as if they were his children at home. He told John Wayre of the original portrait of Vandyke which he had picked up, and asked the barrister out to see it.

“Thank you ; I have seen many before.”

“Many ? How do you mean ? There are but three originals in the world, sir.”

“Three ?” said John, incredulously ; “why, I have met an original skull of Dean Swift at five different museums, though I used to think there was only one.”

“What has that to say to it, sir ?” said Sir Hugh. His face was suddenly shorn of smiles, and once more looked quite pinched and elderly. Mrs. Blenheim withdrew him upstairs, and during his ascent he called Mr. Wayre a coxcomb through his teeth. Then Mrs. Blenheim ridiculed the love-making below, with the most perfect concurrence on Sir Hugh’s part, and declared that really it was infatuation—a most lamentable pity that such a sweet, pretty, affectionate creature should thus be thrown away :

“In fact, I’ve made up my mind, Sir Hugh, that it can never be.”

She then showed him Milly’s sketches and pictures in a portfolio—gates and cows and chalk heads, all with a general paralytic effect of execution; and she gossiped away about her Milly—her beauties, her points, and all the sweet pretty traits which she had stored up from her daughter’s childhood.

Sir Hugh was evidently affected.

“It ought never to be,” he said with enthusiasm, thinking of his maligned Vandyke.

Thought Mrs. Blenheim, “Now I hold the little innocent by the nose at last.”

She poured out to him at her leisure—for now he was securely caught on the sofa beside her, and liked his situation—the whole story of the six thousand pounds, and asked his opinion if any part of it could be in existence.

“Six thousand pounds lost sight of these ten years! You might as well search for the dust of the three holy kings. If the old man had the money to refund, his character was worth more

to him than a few thousand pounds," said the sagacious youth.

"But there are hints of its actual existence which begin to visit me. Here, for instance, is the second instalment I have received from young Mr. Chantrey—the young man who was very properly fined for the assault upon poor dear Mr. Wayre. You saw it in the papers, you know—that sad business."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Sir Hugh; "here, then, we have caught one honest man at last. Young Chantrey is trying to pay up!"

Here Mrs. Blenheim delicately opened up a conception of her own, which will indicate to many of her admirers, who admit how simple yet complete are the devices of genius, the boldness and brilliancy of her mind. We have all remarked occasionally what a hard and business tone a lady of fashion can assume—how she can haggle with the greatest nerve and obstinacy—how she can descend to many trivial details and subterfuges, which would be both pardonable and commendable in the lady of a greengrocer; but,

above all, how she, the suavely charming, essentially refined hostess, so sensitive, so highly educated, and so courteous, can assume a hard governing common-sense, of which her husband is incapable and which her footman is apt to despise—*Hibernis ipsis Hibernior*—that is to say, she can on occasion be more business-like than tradeswomen themselves. Mrs. Blenheim stated her idea of asking Mr. Chantrey to call, that she might thank him, and see if it were possible to obtain from him a larger instalment.

“These things are always managed better face to face,” said a woman who had experienced for many years the influence of beauty upon man. “There will be some awkwardness, of course, in asking him to this house.” She paused, and looked with pondering interrogation in the baronet’s face; but then she suddenly brightened up with determination. “But you know,” she continued, smiling, “business is business. I should be civil to my greatest enemy if it put money in my pocket. It would really be too absurd to set important matters aside for that trifling engage-

ment which never *can* take place ; here is a possibility of some part of poor Milly's fortune being restored, if only we are a little careful and prudent. Really Mr. Wayre must only keep away when Mr. Chantrey comes. I cannot have the interest of my child sacrificed to his sentiments ; let him settle his own quarrels ; we have nothing to do with them. Am I not right, Sir Hugh ?”

“ Certainly, I should think so ; have him up by all means—the one honest man ; have him up—have him up.”

“ He really has been so punctual always to the day he promises,” said Mrs. Blenheim.

“ A business man too—an honest business man. There's poor Masterton, my late agent—well, he was honest and honourable no doubt ; never borrowed money from his equals—a very rare good point ; but he ruined himself and his tailor in waistcoats, and now very likely he'll lead the fashion in a sponging-house. Have up this honest business man ; I'll—I'll throw up a cupola to him in my lawn,” laughed the knowing little baronet.

“ Oh, there is Mr. Wayre just gone, and Milly is coming upstairs — *do* reason with her, Sir Hugh. Of course she will object to Mr. Chantrey coming here, but you know business is business : we cannot let sentiment interfere with it, can we ? I will just write a little note to the honest man and post it. Shall we appoint four to-morrow ? ”

“ Ah, to-morrow is a great picture-sale,” murmured Sir Hugh ; “ unless we could say twelve o’clock.”

“ Picture-sale,” thought Mrs. Blenheim, with an inaudible sigh ; “ that’s the way the creature spends his money ; *he* wants a wife. Certainly, Sir Hugh,” said she aloud, “ twelve o’clock ; ” and as Milly entered the room, she slipped into the back drawing-room, laughing and nodding at Sir Hugh in a way that quite intoxicated him ; he almost kissed hands to her as she vanished.

In came Milly, and seated herself listlessly to do the duties of hostess whilst her mother was out of the room.

Sir Hugh found no earthly difficulty in taking his seat upon the ottoman beside the young lady,

laying his dimpled hands upon either knee, and smoothly breaking to her her mother's intentions of seeing Mr. Chantrey at the house for very sensible reasons ; whereupon Milly seemed quite inclined to fire up, but found herself tongue-tied, since the supreme objection to such a measure was one a young lady could not discuss ; but Sir Hugh's urbane tact surmounted the difficulty for her. Mr. Wayre, he said, was obviously an intimate friend, and it might be painful no doubt if the two gentlemen came together ; that might be easily avoided.

"I can assure you, Sir Hugh, it is not possible," said Milly ; "I shall speak to mamma about it. Mr. Chantrey cannot come to the house at present."

"A singular fine nature this Mr. Chantrey," said Sir Hugh, waving the discussion without pressure or interest apparently ; "he is going to pay back a sum which it would take four times his natural life to amass ; singularly fine—and that at five pounds a quarter ! He'll be in his coffin before he has paid back a thousand !"

“I heard you say the other day, Sir Hugh, that you were obliged to take the agency of one of your properties from Mr. Masterton. There now is the very man for you. Mr. Chantrey would really be a treasure to you. Oh, you must do something for him! Only fancy, he supports a whole family of sick and indigent, and far more important, he writes reports on exhibitions and picture-sales! What an agent he would make! Why, you would command the whole London press; what flaming accounts of Sir Hugh’s harvest homes and Sir Hugh’s ploughing matches! I forget—do you make speeches? Of *course* you do; they would be immortalised, every word; and you would be sainted as altogether the finest landlord in Surrey! Now, what will you do for him?”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do for him. I’ll build a cupola for him on the lawn, and consecrate it to ‘the honest man!’”

“But seriously, Sir Hugh. Don’t lose him.”

“I never take a lady’s opinion on a man, a horse, or a cow. I trust implicitly to them on

bouquets and babies, and, above all things, on beauty." He bowed with a sweet smile, and shook up his golden-red hair with his hand.

"There is no petitioner, however," added Sir Hugh gallantly, "who could have more influence with me, always excepting your charming mother."

"I'm afraid you're a confirmed old flirt," said Milly coolly.

"Not that I love Cæsar less, but Rome more—ha! ha! ha!" Sir Hugh's face bloomed into a laugh.

"Well," said Milly boldly, "I don't know about love; but both Cæsar and Rome would respect you more if you could be a little less absurd. I don't think your manner to my mother becomes either your years or hers. I don't like it, Sir Hugh."

Milly could be insolent as well as her mother, without fluttering her nerves in the least. It is wonderful what training can do.

The rebuke seemed to disagree with Sir Hugh. He rose and stood on the hearthrug to digest it;

he was too much the gallant little gentleman to attempt a retort; and there were some moments' unpleasant silence.

"And what may my age be, in your opinion?" said Sir Hugh gravely, at length.

Milly had meantime been repenting the harshness of her speech. And why was she harsh? Was she acting the jealous little dragon over her mother, and under that instinctive repulsion at the possibility of her mother presenting her with a stepfather which invades all children who have lost one of their parents; or was her taste hurt by the indiscreet levity of Sir Hugh's attentions? Whatever was her motive, she relented; and surveying his plump little person with a gentle smile:

"Your age? Oh, about thirty-five—a very sober age."

Sir Hugh was smiling again. Vanity was his blind side; and he never saw that the young lady was quizzing him. A gentleman's fancy is often perverse, and quite ravel the most beautifully-arranged schemes laid for it. Mrs. Blenheim had

planned that Sir Hugh should be fascinated by Milly ; and the gentleman wilfully and perversely takes a fancy to herself. With a sort of equivocal encouragement, she held him as she might—adapting herself to facts till she could alter them, and direct the erring “innocent” into the proper path she had assigned him.

Sir Hugh vaunted every where his flirtation with the charming widow. He was chaffed about it at his club, and was rather complimented thereby.

“Charming little widow, Mrs. Blenheim,” said Sir Hugh to Mr. Pimpernel. “What a pair of eyes ! and, bless my heart, what a foot !” he said beamingly. “The living likeness of a Saint Cecilia.”

“Had St. Cecilia such an earthly thing as a foot ?” said Mr. Pimpernel gravely.

“My dear Pimpernel, how superior to her weasen little daughter ! a perfectly angelic—a—hem—presence !”

“My dear Sir Hugh, Margaret Blenheim may be a St. Cecilia ; but she is not an angel. She

can sit in an arm-chair as substantially as any little woman of forty."

"Eh?—sit in a chair?" said Sir Hugh, suspending a pinch of snuff midway to his nose.

"Ah! you a connoisseur, and not know that! Why, sir, St. Cecilia was playing the piano one day, and in came a flight of angels—all head and wing. '*Asseyez, mes chers,*' says the Saint. '*Merci bien, mademoiselle, mais nous n'avons pas de quoi.*' They had nothing to seat," cried Mr. Pimpernel, with a loud laugh.

"You irreverent sinner!" smiled Sir Hugh. "No, my widow is not an angel, thank heaven."

A few days after Mrs. Blenheim had opened her design of asking Chantrey to the house, she quietly accomplished it. Sir Hugh and she gave him a gracious though dignified reception. She had curiously considered his habits and tastes, as the members of the Zoological Gardens might prepare for the arrival of some strange rude animal. She could not have a pipe provided; but she had cheese and beer laid out for him, as his proper and habitual aliment.

No sooner did Milly learn that he was actually in the house, than she escaped up to her room quite scared and hurt; and there she remained till he was gone. So David's eyes glanced to the door, in vain expecting her friendly smile to shine upon him, and thaw away the exalted patronage which he was patiently sustaining at the hands of her mother. Sir Hugh, however, continually came to his relief, in warding-off the lady's foolish and unintentionally-insolent questions, and giving an air of common-sense to the interview.

It was quite clear, for instance, to Sir Hugh that the payments were the utmost David could afford; and he advocated this fact with a genial half-playful eloquence. It was also clear to him that David made those payments from the highest and most single motives, and he took to "his honest man" from the first. He asked him to his place kindly and respectfully, questioned him as to his engagements, and hinted that there were many openings for a spirited and educated gentleman. On the whole, the little magnate showed to great advantage, and inspired more than re-

ciprocal feelings in David's simple breast. For the rest, it remains to say David enjoyed his cheese and beer quite as much as if it had been cold turkey and Madeira, and departed much cheered. He had not ventured to inquire for Milly, yet to the last had expected to see her. He looked rather lingeringly back, too, as he went downstairs. He little suspected that she was avoiding him as she would have avoided the small-pox.

The very day on which Mr. David Chantrey made his appearance—the very hour when he was sitting up with Sir Hugh and Mrs. Blenheim in the boudoir, John Wayre came and knocked at the hall-door. He inquired of the little maid if Miss Milly was at home.

“She is, sir; but Mr. David Chantrey is upstairs.”

“Mr. Chantrey!” said Mr. Wayre, with a shock he could not altogether conceal.

“I am just laying lunch for him.”

“Oh, thank you. Well, I think I shall call later. You need not say I called;” and John

Wayre walked off under a sense of outrage upon him which we can have no difficulty in conceiving.

How did the little maid know Mr. Chantrey's two names? Why should she think it necessary to tell Mr. Wayre of his presence with a significant "but"? and what inspired her to give him such gratuitous information about Mr. Chantrey's lunch? These are questions the answers to which are as difficult to me as to my readers. I give them the facts, and it would be a slight to their intelligence to offer my poor conjecture.

That very evening a letter came to Milly from her lover, which astonished her in her turn. It ran thus :

" MY DEAR MILLY,—At your hall-door this morning I was met by the news that Mr. David Chantrey was upstairs, and, it appeared, on the terms of a friendly visitor. I am aware that you became acquainted with him at some time, having seen you with him at the archery meeting, though not then aware of his name. I *had* hoped that

your own feelings and good taste would have suggested to you that such an intimacy must end for ever after what passed between him and me. I now write to assure you that whilst he is a visitor at your house I shall assuredly not come. If, however, I possess any influence over you in virtue of my position as your future husband, I must *insist*, I must *implore*, that you break off all acquaintance with him at once and for ever.

“Yours very affectionately,

“JOHN WAYRE.”

It had been well and wiser if Mr. John Wayre had waited to write this letter till the next morning. These hot-press letters written on the spur of anger—hasty photographs, as it were, of the mind in a storm—are always unwise and injurious, either in business or in love. A nice temperate letter such as he might have composed the next morning, with a generous trustful tone throughout, and just a tender flavour of reproach, would rather have been to his advantage, and have moved

Milly to an affectionate concern ; but such severe words as “ I *had* hoped,” and “ I *insist*,” are very dangerous to direct against a spirited young lady who has been spoiled all her life, especially when they are unjust. If Mr. Wayre was astonished and angry, so was Milly.

“ He seems quite above asking for an explanation,” she said, “ and assumes at once that I am to blame. I’ll not condescend to explain till he chooses to come down from his high horse. Insist, indeed !” smiled Milly ; and she, on her side, sits down hot-press and writes :

“ MY DEAR JOHN,—Of course you are aware that my mother can ask any one she pleases to her own house. You seem to be so well informed of the circumstances of Mr. D. Chantrey’s visit, that it would be quite unnecessary on my part to offer any statement or allege any excuse. You will, pray, consult your own feelings exclusively as to your visits here ; and if you come in such a frame of mind as that in which you wrote your last letter to me, it might be happier for us both that

they were for a time deferred.—Yours affectionately.

“ M. BLENHEIM.”

Now this lively little correspondence could not end here. A shrewd thrust generally brings a shrewder in this fence of pride.

Had Milly only waited till next day, what kind allowances she might have made! what a pretty reconciliation she might have conveyed in the space of two generous lines! But naughty Pride must thrust again, and here was a quarrel born. Of course there came another hot-press letter from John Wayre by next post:

“ DEAR MISS BLENHEIM,— Your letter has only confirmed me in my fears, which I beg to say never took the form of accusation. I had flattered myself hitherto that I had a certain right to advise and influence you, which my true and deep affection for you should have given; but I flattered myself still further, that your feelings towards me would secure compliance in any rea-

sonable demand. A person has been entertained at your house who has offered me the grossest insult one man can offer another. The affair has been blown before the town. Nothing could be more insulting to me than that this person should be admitted into your presence. On my remonstrance, you reply in a few cold, and I will call them unfeeling, lines, implying a refusal to my demand. Under these circumstances, however it may pain me, I can only give you the option you and your mother desire.—Yours, with best wishes for your happiness,

“J. WAYRE.”

“After all I have done for him!” said Milly. “I took him, poor as he was, for his own sake, and I have been faithful ever since.”

Alas! was this a mood in which to write a letter? Yet out came the pretty pink paper again, with her crest and initials on the top in scarlet; and down she sits, hot-press, to make a mortal thrust:

“DEAR MR. WAYRE,—Your letter was at

least explicit, for which accept my thanks. It really has left nothing for me to say further than to assure you I am ready to meet your suggestion at once and decisively. Regretting much the trouble you have put yourself to in this correspondence,—I remain, with very kind wishes yours, &c.

“M. BLENHEIM.

“I send you a parcel by bearer.”

This parcel of course contained all John's elegant presents to her; the exquisitely-carved little scented fan, and the pretty card-case, and the bracelets and the books, also his dear affectionate letters. The same messenger brought back Milly's letters—a well-read, well-worn batch. With a determined little hand Milly put her own letters into the fire, and saw them burnt to ashes.

“I wonder how I feel now,” she said, softly, to herself.

And she felt on the whole very well and comfortable, I believe. Woman's pride is the most buoyant and trusty support. When you flatter

yourself it is under your feet, why, it is sailing over your head like the clouds. When Mr. Chantrey called next, summoned by that importunate little diplomatist her mother, she met him by accident in the hall, and frankly shook hands with him as she passed him.

Of course Milly felt it to be necessary to acquaint her mother with the break-off of her engagement; and she did so without any fuss, as they sat over their little supper, consisting mainly of a lobster and bottled stout.

"John Wayre," said she, "thought proper to read me a lecture, mamma; took quite a high and peremptory tone about Mr. Chantrey coming here."

"Oh, then, John Wayre must have too much leisure," smiled her mother, "when he can mind my business as well as his own."

"We have had a quarrel."

"Have the two dear little doves quarrelled?"

"And the engagement is broken off," said Milly.

"Is it indeed? so the children are tired of the

play at last. Well, my dear, I am very glad to hear it; and I think, to say the least of it, after the long indulgence Mr. John Wayre has had, he has been very impertinent—no, no, don't show his letter to me; I have no interest whatsoever in it; only, for mercy's sake, my darling child, let this be the last I hear of it. I really began to feel the whole business very tiresome and absurd. What a good supper you can eat, my love, in all your misery! I see it has not impaired your appetite."

Quietly thus did Mrs. Blenheim celebrate her victory; she seemed to think the event scarcely worth a joke. Sir Hugh was immediately, however, taken into confidence about it when he called next day, and notified of the break-off. She then took occasion, whilst receiving his congratulations, to give a highly-coloured sketch of Milly's career—her conquests, her refusals, her virtues, and her talents; all narrated to him as if to elicit his advice for the future.

"She is so indifferent, so fastidious, Sir Hugh! I have made up my mind to send her off in the

spring to her uncle at Nice, who is always writing the most pressing invitations—a rich old gentleman, Sir Hugh, with no children of his own.”

“She is too bewitching as it is, Mrs. Blenheim; but when her admirers see her in the light of a lovely exile, she will be perfectly agonising to them,” said the beaming Sir Hugh.

Mrs. Blenheim never ceased to work upon her daughter's pride with a sly chaffing irritation: “Do you think you might venture to do this, love, without the risk of an imperious veto from our little friend?” “Ah, yes; nothing to do with you now; but these little martinets don't see when their command is at an end; he keeps a strict eye on you,” &c.

Sir Hugh put his carriage at the disposal of the ladies at any time Mrs. Blenheim chose to overcome her natural modesty so far as to ask for it. He frequently drove out with them himself, and always looked well beside the widow; seldom could you have the happiness to see a more elegantly-matched couple.

“I have built my cupola on the lawn, Mrs.

Blenheim," said Sir Hugh one day,—“you must come out to admire;” and he drove the two ladies out.

The mowers were engaged upon the lawn; and who should Milly see standing in the midst of it but the athletic figure of Mr. David Chantrey?

“There stands the honest man,” said Sir Hugh, with one of his sweet tenor laughs; “there he is with a cupola of the blue sky—nothing else would be worthy of him.”

“Have you employed him as your agent?” said Milly, with a sudden flush of interest; “how I shall like you and respect you if you have, Sir Hugh!”

“Not so quick, not so quick,” he chuckled; “I have only promised him the cupola—don’t he look well, eh, eh? There’s my neighbour, Lord ——, has an elk chained on his demesne; there’s the Duke of —— has a bear chained in his yard; but I have beaten ’em all. I’m browsing an honest man, unchained—ha! ha! ha!” He saluted Chantrey from the distance.

When they arrived at the hall-door, Sir Hugh

carried off Mrs. Blenheim to show her his yard, and she was anxious to keep Milly at his side; but independent Miss Milly wandered off by herself across the elastic grass, and never stopped till she was face to face with David Chantrey. She strolled off with him till they came to a little shrubbery within sight of the house, and there, under the shelter of the laurustinas, she seated herself comfortably upon a little heap of hay, for one of those cosy chats which she knew so well how to conduct.

“And how have you been, Mr. Chantrey?” she inquired; “I hope you have been keeping within the law since last I saw you.”

“Since last I saw you, Miss Blenheim,” said he, “my life has been like a child’s kaleidoscope—the bits of glass in it change into unexpected shapes at every turn. One day I find myself in the bosom of the Wertley family; the next their enemy—cast out for ever. One day I find myself a black sheep in your mother’s eyes and a friend in yours; the next, to my amazement, I find myself your mother’s friend and avoided by you.”

He smiled, to take from his words all tone of offence. "I wonder what change is coming next."

"Did you not know why I avoided you?" said Milly, surveying him.

"Don't think I was offended; I was only puzzled—and—sorry."

"Do you walk through the world blindfold, Mr. Chantrey?" said she. "Is it possible you did not guess?"

"My conduct towards Mr. Wayre?" asked he.

"I wonder how you can bring yourself to mention his name," said Milly, gravely. "I can tell you it very nearly came to this, that you and I could never know one another again."

David looked at her in silence, and the blood began to tingle in his cheeks.

"And it has come to this—that I am this moment debating with myself whether I am right in speaking to you," she said, softening into a smile. "I sit here, Mr. Chantrey, with a very bad conscience," continued she, sustaining the burden, however, with great equanimity; "but I think you are sorry."

"All the world must blame me. It may be that I had provocation, and had it been any one else—well, well, I had hard luck as it was; and I was clearly wrong."

"On the question of right or wrong I don't pretend to decide between you, though I think you by far the worse offender; but—did Emmie never tell you?"

She asked this vague little question so significantly that David put his hand to his forehead in bewildered thought.

"You don't mean—"

"I do mean it, though. It is broken off now," said Milly calmly, "else I should scarcely sit here talking to you now."

From that moment David's thoughts went off wool-gathering; he scarcely noticed the change she effected in the conversation.

"There! don't look as if you pitied me; or rather bestow your compassion on my real troubles—I have quite enough anxieties to think of, I can assure you." She took from her pocket some letters closely crossed on foreign paper.

"Letters by the last mail from my cousins in Lucknow," said she. "I am going to read to you their account of things there."

She read to him some passages, and she sought to take his opinion upon Indian affairs; and at last he entered on the subject with her freely and with interest. He had a rake in his hand, and was drawing in the short withered grass to him listlessly:

"And when do you expect to meet your cousins again, Miss Blenheim?"

"When! Probably never."

"Yet how fond you are! Then," said he, throwing out the rake again for a fresh haul—"then it seems friendship can exist though two friends never meet again."

"Of course it can; all the warmer, perhaps," said Milly, who was always ready for a little lively or sentimental speculation. "In absence, you see, Mr. Chantrey, the faults all fine away and vanish, while all that is good and lovable shines over to you from the distance—just like the house on the hill, with its six little windows

shining like a diamond brooch. Yet if we trudged all the way to it, we should find it full of rubbish and squalling children. I call that a very neat simile; and to apply it—thus; Aunt Lucy left us this ten years—and I have forgotten all her slaps, and only remember her bonbons.”

Milly said all this so prettily, with her head a little to one side and her gaze upon the hill.

“It follows, then,” said David, dropping the rake, and beginning to rub one of his great knees as if it was rheumatic, “that you and I could be as good friends—even better—if we parted to-day and never saw one another again.”

Milly was taken by surprise, and startled out of her pretty little train of thought.

We have read of lackadasical youths who preface a proposal and lead up to it by such a declaration; but it can scarcely be that our honest friend means that.

“I don’t know that,” said Milly. “If we tried the experiment, you should await an answer by telegraph this day ten years. I’m afraid, however, by that time I should have forgotten your

name and address. Now had I *a wrong* to remember you by, as mamma used to think, I should never forget you."

"I shall do you a right," said David, "which if you knew how much it costs me you would remember also. From to-day, Miss Blenheim, I am 'a friend in India.'"

"I never knew you were romantic, Mr. Chantrey. Are we going to quarrel? What has given you this wonderful notion?"

"Why did you meet me? Why did you not warn me, Miss Blenheim, before I had done so much blind mischief to your happiness?"

"I see what you mean, Mr. Chantrey, and I am very much obliged to you; but you are not the direct cause. I see you are waiting for a compliment, and you shall have it," said she, with a sudden assumption of liveliness: "I should very much regret not to see you again. It would cost me a great deal of pleasure. Are you satisfied yet?"

"I am going to India," smiled David, still talking in figures.

"I can tell you this much," said Milly, with a shade of excitement stealing into her manner; "there is not the slightest need of your sacrifice, if it be really one. Mr. Wayre and I had other grounds of difference, and we can never be any thing to one another again."

"It will come all right when I am a friend in India," said David, gently stubborn.

"Now you must not be so absurd," said Milly. "While it was necessary and right, I did not see you; but Mr. Wayre is a great deal too imperious, and affronted me very deeply. I really have not the slightest wish to be reconciled to him."

"Oh! you make too many conquests to allow for a poor lover's anger. It will all come right when I am a friend in India," still persisted David.

"Oh, well, I will not force my friendship on any one!" said Milly, evidently offended.

"But I accept it," said he; "we will manage to keep it alive, I hope; although—"

"Visitors!" she said, interrupting him care-

lessly, and she pointed down the long avenue, up which rode a lady and gentleman. "Visitors to Sir Hugh! Now I wonder shall mamma and I be expected to entertain them?"

David watched the approaching figures without a comment; when, in another moment, Milly turned to him and said,

"Do you know who that gentleman is? Now, Mr. Chantrey, mamma tells me I have very good nerves. Should you say I look inclined to run away and hide?"

He looked at her, and thought, in his simplicity, she seemed more inclined to lean back on her seat and go to sleep. He told her so.

"See, Mr. Chantrey, what a young lady's training does for her. That is all discipline," returned Milly; now, however, betraying a slight flush on her cheek. "I feel very much inclined to run away from these visitors, I can tell you."

"I'm surprised at that in you," said David; "but I remember that visitors were a terror to my poor mother. You are not bound to see Sir Hugh's visitors."

"Do you see that gentleman, Mr. Chantrey? Ah! I see you have recognised him, and I know him too. If we could induce *him* to go to India! Mr. Chantrey, you vouchsafed to pay me a compliment; and you must not fancy I think over what you say because I remember it five minutes after. Let us move back a little behind the bushes. It was a compliment wrapped up in a friendly reproach, and that is the most refined way of paying one. You said I made too many conquests to allow for a lover's anger. I don't know many conquests of mine, but there is one of the vanquished riding up the avenue."

"Major de Lindesey!" exclaimed David.

"It is very ungraceful to tell you, but the secret was not kept under a bushel. Yes, I was engaged to him for just half an hour."

"To him! Then that is the key to the Major's romance," said David.

"His romance! I'm afraid it had no *hero*," said Milly, bitterly. "I have a contempt for him which I cannot express, for the way he has treated that poor girl whom he escorts about."

"I thoroughly agree with you. I have given up his acquaintance, though I am sorry—"

"Why sorry?" said Milly.

"A bygone!" said David, with a little shrug. "I think him a dishonourable man."

"What do you think of the lady?" said Milly, peeping through the bushes. "Dear me, what a hat! what an absurd habit! Why she looks like a brigand in a sack!"

Milly was in a bitter mood, and we utterly disapprove of the whole tenor of her remarks for the last few minutes. None of us, however, would come off well if there were a busy and conscientious pen always transcribing our moods. She was under some wayward motive which we cannot reach.

The horses' hoofs now clattered audibly, the riders' voices grew audible, and from Milly's ambush the faces were clearly to be seen. Then David remembered the face of haggard beauty he had seen flit by him in the carriage when he walked out with the Major.

"What a handsome woman!" he murmured.

“Do you think so?” said Milly. “A perfect death’s-head!”

At this moment the Major’s wary eyes detected Milly’s dress, and peering closer from his saddle-bow, he appeared to recognise her, for he spoke in a low and hurried voice to his companion, who seemed to remonstrate. In a moment he cantered into the grass, followed sullenly, as it were, by his companion, and came in full sight of Milly, and Chantrey at her side.

The Major lifted his hat to his old love with a flourish, but she gave him the coldest little bow, and took no notice whatsoever of Miss Master-ton, who had drawn up her horse somewhat aloof.

Not the least rebuffed, the Major dismounted in a trice, and came up to Milly, the bridle-rein resting upon his arm.

“We have not met this many a day,” said he cordially, but avoiding even a glance at Chantrey.

“Perhaps it was just as well,” said Milly briefly, without lifting her eyes.

Suddenly the Major turned on Chantrey with abrupt geniality, as if he had just seen him then.

He did not, indeed, offer to shake hands or court a repulse, but he proved himself master of the situation. He expressed his pleasure at meeting him—his surprise at meeting him here—and threw out a jesting allusion to their late chamber-life together.

“Do you carry up the water-buckets yet, my boy, with the blessings of your laundress pursuing you? Old thing—bacon and eggs, I suppose?—I had some hope to civilise him, Miss Blenheim—this noble last of the Goths! Have you taken him in hand?”

“I am going in,” said Milly, rising. “I think you will find Sir Hugh in the courtyard.”

His manner changed and his voice.

“Miss Blenheim,” he said, in a low quick tone, “I want a few private words with you most particularly, and they cannot be said better than here.” Then he turned, as if carelessly, and said to Miss Masterton, who was distant some ten paces, “You should know this gentleman, Miss

Masterton, for he vows you are the handsomest lady he ever saw. Mr. Chantrey, Miss Masterton. Chantrey, be so good as to accompany Miss Masterton to the hall-door. I shall follow in a minute."

Chantrey, who had stood silent all this time, a little drawn up and dignified under the Major's familiar banter, was in duty bound to lift his hat to the lady, who bowed with an absent and troubled air, and then turned off her horse's head, and rode towards the walk.

David cast an inquiring look at Milly's face.

"Go with her, Mr. Chantrey, if you please," she said. "I will hear Major de Lindesey."

Then David overtook Miss Masterton, and walked by her side to the ground in front of the hall-door. They talked a little of the weather and the country, and then the conversation died out. They might just as well never have been introduced. There they were, the lady casting anxious, if not angry, glances at the laurel-thicket which concealed her former rival and De Lindesey, and David standing near her, watching her now and

again in a sort of rapt melancholy—no other words could describe his expression.

And what was he thinking of as he looked at her? He thought of the Major's vindictive confidence to him, and his cold inveterate purpose hinted at not vaguely.

“If a woman put that insult upon me, I should punish her after her kind,” said the Major. Again said he, “I know her now—a fast young lady, a dashing young lady, who has made me the hero of a good story that they whisper about at the clubs. She shall be heroine of another good story, which shall only be whispered about.”

David remembered every minute word, as he looked on the handsome haggard face perched up there like a hawk's, watching the laurel-thicket. He did not believe in a modern Monte Christo. He knew that De Lindesey was simply working the lady retributive harm, by engaging her in a rather bold and undisguised flirtation, which both amused and flattered him as it progressed. He was also willing to believe that the constancy of the vengeance rested rather upon its agreeable

process, in which the cruelty was only in the cumulative result, than on any vertebrated hatred ; but the ruin and the vengeance was, in the result, perhaps not less unmanly and villanous. The thought entered David's heart to warn her. Warn her of what ? What shape could such a warning take ? There was nothing tangible in her danger. Had the Major seemed inclined to put her under a course of *nux vomica*, he could, under the emergency, have ventured to advise her to watch the Major's hand, and heed well what she drank ; but we submit, how could he tell a young lady he had not spoken to twice that she was guilty of improprieties, and that her friend the Major was a bad child's-guide ? It was not to be attempted. You cannot warn a lady who is wilfully drifting under taboo.

We in the mean time shall take the privilege Miss Masterton would give her diamond earrings to obtain this moment, and see what the Major has to say to Milly behind the laurels, with none but his browsing horse to witness.

Milly sat cold and self-possessed to listen, and

the Major stood before her respectfully as he was speaking, and addressed her with a flattering consideration.

"I am soon returning to Scotland, Miss Blenheim," said he; "and I wished, above all things, to see you once again. Chance and your good-nature have granted this wish." He was silent for a second to observe her mood; but she sat like a little sphinx—not a feature showed a sign of her mind.

"When I say, Miss Blenheim, that I have never wholly lost hope of regaining the happiness that was once in my hand, I am not guilty of presumption. You cannot say so, having once encouraged me?"

"You should not allude to that," said Milly quickly, yet gently; "it's not fair, is it?"

"Remember, Miss Blenheim, you parted from me in anger, instead of kindness."

"Because you were a little too pushing, Major de Lindesey; but all that is bygone now. I dare say mamma misled you."

"Because," said the Major, "in my disap-

pointment and suffering I was misled, and made a last effort; because I was betrayed by the jealousy of the moment, when you tortured me, by your notice of Wayre, into rudeness long repented of. Can one writhe with grace or moan in melody?" said the Major, soaring into borrowed eloquence.

"Pray do not continue your apology. So far as I am concerned, you are freely forgiven, of course. I think Miss Masterton is waiting for you."

"She has a gentleman to amuse her, and she is content," said the Major.

"You can surely have nothing more to say to me. Don't keep the poor thing," said Milly, in a voice which left the Major in doubt whether she was in jest or earnest.

"I have a question to ask, which, for the sake of our old friendship, I trust you will pardon also, if you will not answer. Is this report true, that your engagement has been broken off with Mr. Wayre?"

"That is a very odd and unwarrantable ques-

tion to ask me," said Milly, with tranquil dignity.

"I ask it as an honourable man and a gentleman."

"You put forth a very high claim indeed," said Milly, with the faintest *souçon* of irony. "No such engagement exists between me and Mr. Wayre."

"Then," said the Major with some vehemence, "I am free to tell you—it is not the first time I have told you, and it is as true now as then—so help me G—, I love you deeper, warmer, wilder than ever! I see no woman like you. Listen to me patiently, as you did once; put your hand in mine again, as you did once. I know no triumph in success, no happiness in prosperity, unless you are at my side."

He was approaching her quite a-glow, and about to take her hand; but she rose and retreated a step or two, quite gently still.

"You should say all this to Miss Masterton, as an honourable man and a gentleman, should you not, Major?"

"Miss Masterton!" he echoed with a harsh

scorn, stayed in his tide of passion. "Heaven forbid I should speak disrespectfully of any girl who wears a lady's dress ; but you know *me* and you know *her*. The suffering you have cost me, Miss Blenheim, has made a worse man of me ; I am reckless. You might make a good man of me yet."

"Well, Major de Lindesey, I have heard you now very patiently. I am sorry you have put me in so ungracious a position as to repeat my distinct refusal of your offer. I am not in the least flattered by it," she said, beginning to move away.

. "Stay, Miss Blenheim, one moment. In retracting your consent—for I deny that I was ever refused by you—you were influenced by a reason—a reason furnished by my own fidelity and affection to you ; you were frightened at the notion of marrying a disgraced man. That objection, then, has vanished. I am *not* disgraced ; my conduct has *not* been condemned by society. I may say without vanity—for it is the simple truth, which you can convince yourself of on the slightest in-

qu岸ry — that I never was more courted, I never was more invited about; my hall-table is covered with cards. I am going to the levée as I used, and altogether I have never been so prosperous or honoured.”

“ Why don’t you share it all with Miss Masterton ?” said Milly, twitting him still.

“ You have repeatedly forced in Miss Masterton’s name. Once for all,” said he in his irritation, “ I cannot love any woman whom I do not respect.”

“ Then you have been amusing yourself with poor Madeline all this time,” said Milly stoutly. “ I will go straight and tell her all you have said; it will open her eyes.”

Off started Milly, threading her nimble way between the bushes, as a short cut to the gravel; and the Major, embarrassed by his horse, walked quickly round after her, perfectly appalled.

Miss Masterton saw Miss Blenheim coming quickly towards her; looking straight up at her with what would have struck an ignorant observer as a very game expression. Madeline was a much

bolder type of woman than our little Milly ; but so steadfast altogether was the air and action of the latter, that Miss Masterton turned her horse's head towards the gate and put him to a walk, with some half-formed notion that she was about being insulted before a strange gentleman.

Milly, however, gave her a nod of smiling recognition, which is particularly worth noting here, because it was the last that ever passed between her and Madeline Masterton. Milly came up fearlessly, then, to the horse's shoulder, and begged Miss Masterton not to take unkindly what she had to tell her ; it was told only to serve and undeceive her. She then mentioned what the Major said of the young lady, neither adding nor taking from the sentiments ; and she did not tell how he had proposed for her a second time.

" I do not believe you ! " cried Miss Masterton ; " and I plainly see the spirit in which you tell this to me,—the spirit you have always shown to me."

" *Do* believe that I speak out of regard for you," said Milly quietly. " Judge if it would be

worth deceiving you when Major de Lindesey is here to deny his words, if he can."

Leading his horse, the Major came up at this moment, with a very uncomfortable expression.

"Let us go back at once," said Miss Masterton to him; "Sir Hugh is not at home."

"Come, then; I will explain all to you on the way."

So Madeline had her last warning from the lips of her old rival, and this was all that came of a kindly effort to save her. It came, we must, however, acknowledge, from a very suspicious quarter.

The lady and gentleman both rode down the approach, and Milly could observe that Miss Masterton was silent, as is the way with proud and sullen women; but the Major was talking at large, as is the manner of gay deceivers, waving off into the air certain matters as unworthy of credit. This action Milly particularly noticed, and she knew what a man's long tongue could effect in charming an angry lady to rest.

She nodded up and down dolefully after them,

and then looked at David in silence. Between him and her there was nothing more to be said about the business. To-night, indeed, her mother and she may have a gossip on it over their little supper, and bebies of elderly ladies in all directions will discuss it by and by.

Presently Milly seated herself on the hall-door step and burst into a silvery laugh.

“And after what I told you, Mr. Chantrey,” said she, “what did you think of the meeting between the Major and me? You must know I have not met him since what we may call my escape of him.”

“Did you not meet him at the Wertleys’ that day I met you there?”

“Yes, to be sure, for a moment, but nothing passed between us. By the way, Mr. Chantrey, I wonder at you for quarrelling with him. I remember hearing him on that very occasion speaking most warmly of you; he made quite an effort to excite Emma’s pity by a tragic account of your accident. *You* have no reason to quarrel with him.”

"No reason!" said David in a hushed voice.
"He is no gentleman; he is no man."

"Dear me," said languid Milly, "how well he would be punished if society thought as you do!"

And this was all that passed between them about the Major.

Quietly and undramatically David parted from Milly Blenheim that evening, without the least allusion to his late resolution; but he went to the Blenheims no more.

Further, he wrote a short letter—to whom, of all people in the world, but John Wayre, stating to him briefly the circumstances from which his visits to the Blenheims arose, and at whose instance he went; how Miss Blenheim strictly avoided meeting him, and was offended when he was invited. Perhaps in this part he rather over-coloured; but the man had a zealous way about him when his heart was in it, and we may surely pardon him.

"I do not know how you will take this communication," concluded he, "but it is made from two motives only: first, to do justice to Miss Blen-

heim ; and, secondly, to compensate you in some measure for the mischief I have done you.”

How Mr. Wayre received this letter shall be seen in due time and place.

CHAPTER III.

TABOO.

"BE fast—be fast—*be not too fast*," is the inscription upon the walls of Society. Society, that pure priestess, is indulgent and liberal enough to her vestals. They may read all the small type of the newspapers, and discuss its saintly contents without reproach.

They may stare at the heroines of the *demi-monde*, investigate their career in an inquisitive or philosophical spirit, and model from their costume the shape of a hat or cloak. They may learn slang from the males of their family, and come to use it with the familiar grace of low life above stairs, yet be in vogue, and stand within the chaste vestibule honoured and cherished. Much shall be forgiven; but once outstep the border, they dance along—once touch unholy ground with the sole of the

foot, and the priestess very decorously puts them out, and shuts her gates on them for ever.

Often, therefore, the climax of social popularity is closest to this dire expulsion. The fatal step is taken in the very glow of enjoyment and success. Then follows an *éclat*, which really we think of with a nervous shudder; the sentence is so mercilessly executed, in such cold blood. It is so paramount to gratitude, to pity, to friendship, and even to kindred, that we think of it with wonder, with aversion, yet with a forced approval.

We have various useful and delicate phrases for indicating certain stages in this *via dolorosa*, which leads to outer darkness for ever. We say of the offender, "she begins to be talked about," or "rather blown upon," or "she is *too fast*." Then be sure that taboo is gathering over that woman's head; presently ladies forget to bow to her, and by and by her name is banished from their lips, or escapes from them with a blush.

The ban is then pronounced; it is not less terrible because shorn of circumstances and ceremonies. Then, be the sinner as beautiful as a

Pleiad, it is granted to the very driest stick of spinsterhood to sniff at her and stiffen at her gracious bow. Though she be brilliant and intellectual as a De Staël, the cackle of a red-nosed miss can frighten her, and silence her. She who despised women, and in intellectual preëminence might verily be crowned their queen, would fawn on the skirts of vulgar matrons for their notice, their countenance, their card on her hall-table. But the excommunication is merciless, and all female donkeydom kicks the poor lioness to death.

It is right and needful that such a law should be. Were it administered by men indeed, it would soon, we fear, grow lax and partial; but in the hands of our ladies it is Median; and Society, that pure priestess, has taken no spot hitherto upon her white robes.

What shall we liken it to, this great and inexorable law—this statute administered by feeble and vacillating hands, yet strong and cruel, because based on fear—rigid, because cemented by pride? It is like quarantine in the idle, luxurious East, where cowardice and fear of death are found

an abiding principle, while justice and moral right faint and doze all day. We fear the plague-spot with a wholesome alarm which tramples on pity, and we hunt the fugitive from our shining streets, though but yesterday we caressed and loved her.

To what shall we liken the tabooed one? She is like a leper sitting without the walls. Nay; she is a ghost, and this taboo is social death.

If we glance at Madeline Masterton's conduct, and her social position before this period, we shall find many palliations, if palliations be to the purpose when the penalty was unmitigated. Let us at the outset give full weight to the fact that she had no mother. So she carried the bridle upon her neck, and let her will gallop whither it listed. She made her own laws, and, as far as her light went, adhered to them. The arts of husband-catching she openly despised, perhaps too openly; and she would sit in the conspicuous background, singular in her independence and self-resource. Her clever pencil brought her into notice; her strong character and her *distingué* beauty would not suffer her to be neglected. She was noticed

enough by both ladies and gentlemen in her conspicuous seclusion, and the poor girl no doubt found her own secret satisfaction in this. She was bold and independent, too apt perhaps to be defiant when there was no one to take up her gauntlet. All this singularity was most injurious, a miscalculation and a mistake; it exposed her to dangers which more designing young ladies would have escaped. If she wanted a mother, she had a father whose example and character were most pernicious. Mr. Masterton was a bad child's-guide. He was fond of her and proud of her; but what influence he had, had poison in it. He had a low standard in his mind of what a lady should be, and he sought to make her such a woman as his gross taste could comprehend—a girl, sir, with no nonsense about her; dressy, rakish, and fast; such a lady as he could admire in his younger days, and which he admired yet. All men have their ideal of what a woman ought to be, and this was Mr. Masterton's. He gave her dress and jewelry, which he procured upon credit, and never paid for from that day to this.

The man had a genius for winning a tradesman's confidence, with his swaggering patronage and his generous expansion of chest. When he introduced into society his Madeline—then all rustling and glittering, so tall, so bold, and so fast—he thought she was worthy of an earl's hand and heart, and he watched her with delight and pride.

He was agent to three large properties, being an excellent business man; he had consequently a large circle. It was his end and aim in life to know great people, and no man of strong purpose can fail altogether in his end and aim. He knew many people of position, and would have you believe that he knew all. Yet Mr. Masterton could not have been much respected by gentlemen, for it was a fact that in their district club he had his name put up, and he was summarily black-balled. Like Dame Quickly, it seemed they could not abide swaggerers. But he was successful in bringing his daughter out into a fashionable circle; and perhaps she was all the more noticed by kind and influential hostesses from the fact that her only parent was a bad child's-guide.

Madeline first made acquaintance with the Major at U——n House. She neither admired him nor sought him till he laid siege to her heart with kindness. Women can rise above flattery, resent patronage, despise position, and revolt at proffered love; but few, I believe, can withstand a long and persevering course of kindness. He was immensely taken by her, and he diligently sought to win her; but she never sought him. Her bold and random manner repulsed him at first, but again piqued and attracted him.

"She's an odd creature," he used to say; "overcharged with character, proud as Lucifer." She could be tamed by nothing but kindness. And the Major grew very kind. He had a humble and a graceful manner with ladies. When he was under their attractions his selfishness took the shape of an egotism which a woman does not like to slight, but rather indulges and fosters, for it flatters her with a subtle flattery, it is so sincere; and it exercises those qualities which beautify her sex more than bloom or symmetry. She is ever fain to be sympathising and comforting. The

Major spoke to her as to his equal, and even his superior; yet he endeavoured to establish for himself a respect. He began to tame her with kindness, which he showed in a hundred small considerate acts. As a slight instance, we may state that on one occasion, when her colour-tubes were nearly all exhausted, he quietly sent to London, without her knowledge, and got her a fresh supply, which he gracefully presented to her, with many apologies for the liberty; on another occasion he was the means of selling a picture for her, and putting fifty pounds in her purse. He strove to stimulate her ambition as an artist, indeed, by every means within his power; but there was one proof of interest in her which evidenced that he had conquered her and remained on her mind. Watching his opportunity, he gave her friendly and respectful advice, and he told the young lady her faults with a daring candour.

Now I myself, and probably my reader, would take a very decided aversion to any one presuming to show us such kindness as telling us our defects; and nothing seems to establish Miss Mas-

terton's eccentricity more strongly than her conduct towards the Major when he took this liberty.

Her eyes filled with tears, and she gave him her hand, and said with a perfect absence of slanginess,

"You are a friend."

It really appeared, and the fact is quite beyond either my comprehension or explanation, that she liked him from that day forth. He acquired a great influence over her, and ultimately quite made a conquest. She trusted him implicitly, and made him her companion. A blameless courtship grew up between them, which was never subjected to unkind remarks; on the contrary, every one agreed that the Major was paying her legitimate attentions, and they seemed prepared to hear that it was a match.

Then came the incursions of the Blenheims—mother and daughter—to the house, and all was changed. The fickle Major's gaze was ravished by our brilliant little friend. Her pretty face, her exquisite French manner, as the ladies called it, her vivid small-talk, and those long attentive

gazes contrasted too favourably with Madeline's manner, eccentric and abrupt, her slangy dialect, her sturdy pride, and also her ingrained slovenliness. Milly was tidy and trim as a fancy pigeon; and she was, as long as you did not bore her, a most diverting companion; whereas such talent as Miss Masterton possessed was not reducible to small-talk. She could be clever and bold and fast; but that indescribable electric something which gives the harmony and edge to conversation was not present with her. There was a certain uneasy effort, a spirit of intellectual aggression rather than flow, which strained your mind and her mind, and interested neither. She had the boldness of secret nervousness, the restlessness of a secret anxiety to please. Milly rather sought to please and amuse herself; therefore she could please you. She could be silent and listen, and talk the subject out, whatever it might be, with a placid faith in its interest for the nonce. Madeline did not stand a chance with Milly in the social arena; yet in mind and passion Milly was a dwarf to her.

The Major deserted his old love, and gave Milly the triumph. All his flattering humility and his respectful attentions were gradually transferred to the little siren; and she accepted them as her due with an indifference that became her. She let her mother do the love-making. She only troubled herself to play croquet with the Major, and allow him to wait upon her.

• He never thought, nor dreamed of telling Milly her faults, I promise you.

Meanwhile Miss Masterton concealed her pain, and only suffered herself to writhe and frown in her own lonely room amongst her paints and her sketches. She would sit in her window watching the faithless Major playing croquet with her rival—watching him with possibly a daub of Prussian blue upon her cheek and a streak of flake-white upon her uncoiling hair, biting her nails to the quick, as was her habit when disturbed. She had made sure the man had cared for her, because, forsooth, he had told her her faults, forgetting that very possibly he had told them because they offended his own taste, and thus interfered with

the full enjoyment of her company ; that he might have told them, in short, just for the same reason he would have hinted to the cook that there was too much onion with his beefsteak. The manner, indeed, of his candour was courteous and feeling ; but how often is the rough sterling good rejected when the polished self-interest swells our hearts with gratitude ! Manner is, after all, every thing ; it is the charm, the illusion, to lack which wit and virtue are flat and stale.

Her lonely sufferings and jealousy at these times injured the girl, no doubt, and made her reckless and unwomanly.

When she returned to London, she happened to learn from one of the Major's brother-officers, to whom he had himself formally introduced her, the story of the Major's selling out.

Whilst this discovery was working its healing effect, and the very sensible act of the Major presented to her mind with that heinousness which the ladies of that period were sure to see in it from the peculiar piteous circumstances of the Indian Mutiny, Madeline suddenly found she had

been deceiving herself; that if her respect was lessened, and if she despised his so-called pusillanimity, she was by no means resigned to his marrying Miss Blenheim. This piece of intelligence came to her with the usual exaggeration which attends all projects matrimonial; she understood that the Major had actually proposed and been accepted. Well, we all know what slighted woman will do. Miss Masterton resolved to punish the Major.

“I never sought him,” said she; “he singled me out for this humiliation before all my friends. I’ll sting him.”

So she sealed up her sting in a scented envelope, and, putting on a thick fall, she called at the door of his club in a cab, and giving the note to the cabman, instructed him to leave it with the simple words, “Left by a lady.”

How effectual, beyond her expectations, was this simple device! How it wrung his heart, heightened his disgrace, and haunted his pillow, the reader is already instructed. We should strenuously advise young ladies of Madeline’s

temperament to think twice before they sting so hard.

Miss Masterton began to be talked about, and she certainly was far from prudent in the manner she allowed herself to be cavaliered about by our friend the Major. Of course we do not mean to say that she went with him alone to a private party or dinner; such an insult to a host, in fact, from him as well as her is out of the catalogue of possibilities. Nor do we make ourselves responsible for the extent of her indiscretions. We satisfy ourselves with the simple prefix to the rumours against her of the words, "it was said." People infer so much when they see a little, that it is clearly impossible for us to winnow the truth from the romance.

It was said she was seen with him alone, more than once, in the stalls of Covent Garden; and even the *outré* grandeur of her dress was described by curious feminine eyes. The large comb of gold-and-pearls with which she secured her auburn hair; the gown of amber silk, picturesque indeed, but in atrocious taste as apparel for one so fair

and young; the dark-blue opera-cloak, with its silver-trimmed hood and large silver tassels. There certainly was no mistaking her grand pale face and air, which was sufficiently striking to attract all the opera-glasses in the house—the men to admire, and the women, we suppose, to criticise.

It was said they were seen wandering together in the fields near Battersea, having left their horses at a hotel; and that they were engaged in—let us say picking cowslips; but what bird of the air conveyed the intelligence to the scandal-monger we cannot avouch, and we emphatically impeach the statements as malicious fables.

It was said that they went to subscription-balls together alone, and danced all night; but here we are enabled also entirely to deny the story; for on the only two occasions on which Miss Masterton went to public balls she was accompanied by her father, and never stood up to dance.

It was said, and was true, that they took long rides into the country together; and in sad truth

they did fly about rather too much together for the lady's good name.

Her female acquaintance began to look coldly upon her, and, whether by accident or intention, began to cut her in the street. At first she flattered herself it was accident; but it happened too constantly for that supposition. She grew angry, and resolved to anticipate those ladies for the future—to cut instead of being cut. She who used to spend so much of her time on visits, and, indeed, was somewhat courted by many families on account of her talents, found herself neglected; no affectionate invitations, no gushing morning visitor dropping in to see her charming pictures. She was a lavishly-generous girl. How many of those charming pictures had her friends made booty of, and now possessed, when the poor artist was deserted—we cannot say undeservedly deserted!

The gentlemen, indeed—fathers, uncles, and brothers—were as cordial as ever, perhaps more so, from two motives;—to atone, as it were, for the neglect of their ladies; and also because a fast

woman has always a sort of sinister attraction for gentlemen. Both motives contained a measure of insult. It was simply to give one hand in greeting, whilst with the other they waved back their wives and daughters and sisters with the look which said, "We men may speak to whom we please; but respectable women must not approach. Unclean! unclean!"

We laud them for the distinction; they were clearly right. We may pity the plague-stricken fugitive, but we cannot give her shelter in our houses. Great is the law of taboo. Thanks to it, Victoria's court is different from the court of Charles the Second.

Those were halcyon days for the tabooed. Mistress Nell Gwynn would have led but a poor life of it now amongst our ladies, though those olden ladies quarrelled for her soiled smiles. Satan and his followers were once princes in heaven; and these ghosts of society have held sceptres once.

To return: Have we for a moment left it to be inferred that the Major suffered the smallest

social stigma ; that he was liable to the faintest suspicion of slight or opprobrium from the ladies of his acquaintance ? If we have, we apologise ; for nothing could be further from the fact. It was ascertained—nor was it very difficult to ascertain—that the Major was only engaged in a flirtation, and was disengaged. Indeed we have no doubt he made this pretty clear. There are looks, and shrugs, and lifts of the eyebrows by which men can put forth their disclaimer to any such grave charge as contemplated matrimony ; and ladies can tot up these little signs tolerably correctly. The Major was more popular than ever.

Some fashionable ladies, indeed, would deal him out a little half-playful reproach, and call him very wicked, and even threaten to beat him with their fans ; others were strictly and coldly silent on the point, and disapproved of him in their hearts ; but none conceived the notion of cutting the man or excluding him from their houses.

We cannot afford to taboo a gentleman for such matters. Of course, if a gentleman is caught with a card in his sleeve at loo and the like, we

kick him downstairs and disgrace him ; but for any gentlemanly piece of villany which comes under the slang term "fastness" he holds his pardon in his hand. No wonder, then, that poor tabooed women have but one wish on their lips continually—"I wish I was a man." Society, we repeat, cannot afford to taboo a man of standing and influence; and though the blame, and cowardice, and two-thirds of the sin, is generally theirs, they are sure to be acquitted, and the woman sacrificed without mercy. We do not attack this solecism. The woman *must* be sacrificed, and we really see no means of punishing the man. We may throw damaged cargo overboard, but the rotten timbers of the vessel must hold their place.

Miss Masterton began to be deserted by all her friends, but the Major's fidelity was unshaken. In sunshine and shadow he was at her side ; and for this much we avouch, that whatever were the designs he was drifting towards, he was not unconscious of the attractions he so monopolised. I do not believe that unless their rides were very

pleasant and the lady's company very agreeable, he would have been very persevering in his attentions, were they for evil or for good. Vanity had surely a finger in it, and a certain pride of conquest.

But why should we not believe that the Major, who came to curse, remained to bless, and that he was now holding the light and agreeable post of guardian-angel, as formerly he had proposed to himself?

Mr. Masterton took a most agreeable view of the whole business, and considered the Major secured, and his daughter already to all intents and purposes mistress of Castle Craigh. This sanguine gentleman had arranged, moreover, that he was to step into the agency, and escape from his creditors into the wilds of Scotland. In that retirement he believed he could manage to get through his business without the intolerable nuisance of a dun or a bailiff waiting at the door for him to pay him the compliments of the season. It struck him, however, that the Major was certainly inclined to procrastination; and though he never

lost confidence in the ultimate result, he became naturally impatient to see him shilly-shallying with his (Mr. M.'s) immediate interests. Indeed, poor man, it had been well with him if it were only the Major he had to watch and stimulate ; but at this crisis his proud and wayward daughter gave him equal trouble.

Her pride was baneful to her in her commonest interests, and led her to overleap her object. She would not stoop to the common angling arts which poor ladies are driven to practise when a gentleman is so timid or so stupid as not to advance. When her father would question her anxiously whether the Major had given a sign, she would affect to misunderstand him, and in wayward pride scowl at the notion of their guest having any matrimonial intentions, or that she was awaiting any issue. She neglected every advantage, she despised every legitimate subterfuge, although she knew that once installed as mistress of Castle Craigh, our wives and daughters would receive her and bow to her whenever she came to town. The ring, the amulet gold-ring, is the

little potent charm. It is the dip in Jordan which alone can cure the leper without the gates.

Miss Madeline—the fast, the slangy, nay, the bold—was nevertheless too proud to employ any arts or to take any advantage. What she was to him to-day she would be to him to-morrow—recklessly trustful, saucily independent, as was her nature. For instance, a note came to her from the Major to break off some appointment he was unable to keep ; and Mr. Masterton desired her to keep that note carefully, as it contained a passage towards the end which seemed to commit the Major, and might be used *in terrorem* against him in case of necessity. The young lady tore up the letter and burned it when her father left the room. “Whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad.”

It was proposed by Mr. Masterton, who was not unconscious of the gathering social cloud over his daughter's head, to pierce the gloom with a burst of sunshine. In fact, the genial papa suggested a large picnic, and undertook to arrange it. The Major entered into the scheme heartily, and

promised to furnish his hamper ; moreover he disposed of the obliging services of a very troublesome lacquey who used to mount guard on the pavement without, anxiously desiring that Mr. Masterton should take the fresh air ; in fact, a bailiff employed by a certain jeweller in the Strand. The Major paid a portion of the debt, and had the official withdrawn ; whereupon the uncaged bird plumed his wings, arrayed him in his best Poole-frock, and began to fly by day again. We may say here that the loan on the Major's part was quite spontaneous ; for Mr. Masterton had one virtue, and a very high and rare one,—he could rob creditors, indeed, on a princely scale, but he could never bring himself to ask a loan from a friend. He went forth, then, and invited his gentleman friends to his picnic,—young, larking fellows of good family ; and these are the life-blood of a picnic or a ball, affirmed he. His daughter sat down and wrote to all the ladies of her acquaintance,—to some formally, to some pressingly and affectionately, requesting their presence at her picnic. Considering her common-

place occupation, her cheek was strangely flushed, and her fastidiousness about words and phrases for mere notes of invitation was only worthy of a boarding-school Miss writing invitations for her birthday ball. "Pray *do* come," "I hope you will not disappoint me," "You *must not* fail," and such-like accents of entreaty, proclaimed her state. She was at that stage with proud spirits, when they humble themselves so low, that they can never forgive a rejection. Then comes the fatal reaction of pride, and the lady generally feels inclined to—kick over the traces. She asked after the children so affectionately. She promised to paint sketches of them; to give Missy another lesson in drawing, and the rest of it,—all piteous bribery, which she made sure could not fail in its effect. These symptoms are usual, and proclaim the state of taboo.

Mr. Masterton's efforts were crowned with complete victory; not a gentleman of his acquaintance refused. There were two or three young honourables; there were young baronets, collegemen—among them the victorious stroke of the

Cambridge Eight that year—all of them admirers of Mr. Masterton ;—all very happy to come.

But the next day came defeat. Instead of quietly submitting to the silent sentence of the law, Miss Masterton had courted an articulate condemnation, and it was pronounced. The ladies declined, all of them ; acquaintances and friends sent coldly-polite refusals, some without even a softening excuse.

Madeline was thrown into considerable agitation by this crowd of witnesses against her ; her eyes and cheeks bore the traces of crying. Red eyes are not pretty ; yet when she entered with her sad and somewhat scared expression, she never looked handsomer. Just as the dolphin never shows its beauties save in agony, I think a woman never looks so beautiful as when the mind is suffering. She came over to the table quietly, even tamely, and laid a heap of little notes upon it.

“ They have been coming altogether,” she said, turning to the Major. “ Two only have yet to arrive, and they will be apologies also ;

strange, is it not, that apology could be another name for insult?"

"My dear girl!—insults? Here are a parcel of elderly ladies who naturally object to dine on the grass and catch lumbago without any earthly object; and besides—you will pardon me for saying it—your father is not very popular just now. If there is any snub in the matter, it is directed against him, not you."

She stood looking out of the window, whilst the Major turned over the little notes carelessly.

"Don't you understand?" asked the Major.

"What?" she said, confusedly. "I—I lost what you said last; I was thinking. You said something about my father."

The Major repeated in substance what he said, and added briskly,

"At least we'll have gentlemen enough; and we must not be conquered. We must have our picnic, and you will be in all the more request."

"You are much older and wiser than I," she said, turning to him reproachfully. "Why did

you not warn me? why did you not see that our intimacy would come to this?"

"My dear Madge, our picnic has come to this—nothing more."

"You see I am cut and snubbed by even ladies I could call my friends."

"And does that grieve you much? They were not friends, but captious patrons, Madge. Just look back over your acquaintance with them; they made use of you to paint their children for them, and to sit on their sofas as an ornament to their rooms, because you were handsome and talented. Seriously, my dear girl, you allowed them to make too much use of you, and here is the gratitude you have earned."

He took up one of the notes.

"Here, now, is Mrs. Hatton, whose eldest son Tommy you elaborately painted in velvet Zouave costume; she who used to call you her darling girl. Mrs. Hatton presents her compliments, and writes only three lines. By Jove! did she blush as she penned it? Was it for this that you canonised Tommy?—Here's Mrs. Markley; you painted

a beautiful portrait for her,—herself in magenta, and her baby in long clothes. She used to call you her sweet Madge, eh? Well, she's a shade better than Mrs. Hatton. 'My dear Miss Masterton, very sorry,' etcetera. She ought to be. Was it for this you idolised her tapioca face, and made her baby in long clothes 'a joy for ever'?—Here's old Miss Hughes, whom you presented with a whole portfolio of beautiful sketches, to show at her tea-fights. Why, she blows so cold, the note would give one a chilblain to hold it. How she tossed her nipped old nose as she wrote! You see how it is, Madge. You're just the most generous girl alive. These good friends of yours take all you give them, and call you 'darling!' 'love!'—but when they have made all the use they can of you, they—just discharge you from their service without a character."

"But a moment ago you told me those refusals meant nothing but refusals. What do you mean by 'without a character'?" she said, in tones quiet but trembling.

"I mean that you have dared to ride in a
VOL. III.

hansom when other ladies ride in cabs ; I mean that you have ventured to lay aside your bustle, and been so outrageous as to take a quiet ride in the Park with an old friend, or appear in an opera-stall without a chaperon ; and consequently the dowagers have put you into Coventry ; so you have got to take to a white sheet and taper till they are pleased to think you are punished sufficiently, when, perhaps, they may receive you once more and make use of you."

At another time the probable effect of these lively sentiments upon Miss Masterton would have been to tempt her to mutiny against these imperious matrons ; now she only replied with a broken sob, as she stood looking out of the window.

"Now don't be foolish, Madge," he said, coming over to her.

"I had the greatest confidence in you ; you should not let me have been exposed to this."

"Why, what on earth have you done ? Tell me a single sin you have committed to deserve the snubs of these women. You ride with me.

Why, in Canada I remember a lady and gentleman used to sleigh away alone in the morning over the snow, and nobody saw more of them till sundown; but—”

“I should not, I know—I should not have been so reckless,” interrupted Madeline, “but that I had the utmost faith in your judgment and your honour.”

“Why should you have such confidence in me?” said the Major, with a sudden coldness.

“You acted once to me like a *true friend*, and I never forgot it to you, though you changed and treated me,—well,—without much ceremony afterwards. I always remembered it to your favour. Once you told me the faults of my character which were harmful to me, and you gave me good advice; I felt it so much, and I tried to mend my faults. I had rather have found you untrue to me *then than now*.”

The Major coloured conspicuously under this woman’s soft gaze; he stammered and fidgeted with his watch-chain.

“Miss Masterton,” he said, when his little con-

fusion had subsided, "I have been acting inconsiderately towards you ; and I am very sorry. You shall have the best advice I can give you, and it does not come late. You must be very cautious ; these women are not kind, but they are just enough. You should not go out without some married lady ; you have been a little too fast. Stay at home for a while ; paint your pictures, and keep quiet. The little gossip will soon blow over, and the stream will run clear."

"And you?" she said, looking up at him.

"I will go to Scotland to-morrow." (He took her hand on an impulse, and laid the other softly on her shoulder.) "I will give your father a hearty lift before I go, and we'll square all wrongs between us."

She was taken quite by surprise ; and we cannot say it was altogether a pleasant one.

"*Must* you go?" she said, with a lingering emphasis.

"You see I must," he replied.

Then came one of those silences which occur when some strong feeling is brewing and rising in

a woman's breast, whilst she knows not whether to smother it or give it vent. To use plain English, she knew well a proposal of marriage was long due to her in common manliness and honour. She knew that for no other reason had she subjected herself to affront and a terribly false position; yet her wrong was nameless, speechless; her tongue was tied, though her heart was kindling. When she found words, they were as quiet and tame as need be, yet significant:

"You have come here day after day unasked —by me, and unsought by me. Why *must* you go now?"

"I am *afraid* to stay," said the Major, confusedly. "Let us part this very hour. Give me your hand and your forgiveness."

She gave him her hand.

"Afraid of me?" she said, very scornfully, and forcing a laugh; "I wish I could pluck that white feather out of you."

The Major laughed too, and immediately grew smooth and smiling again.

"Well," said he, "after all, the harm is done,

and I believe we had better brave it out. One word—are you afraid of these matrons?”

“Those people?” she said, with a queenly wave of her hand at the question; “I despise them too heartily. I want neither their friendship nor yours.”

“Come, come, we’ll defy the dowagers together. We’ll not plead guilty by yielding to their fiat. What on earth have we done that we should be trampled on?”

He blew up the embers of her pride, and the flame rose readily enough. The first shock now was over, and she felt indignant with the ladies.

So indeed she might; for the Major’s statement of the case was not without foundation. One of Madeline’s many weaknesses was a princely generosity. She knew the value of nothing she possessed; a bracelet, a diamond, a picture she would give away on the impulse, and think of them no more, if she could but gratify those whom she called her friends.

Here now one word from the Major would have saved Miss Masterton this shock—one word,

even then, would have neutralised it; but that word never came. There was no doubt the lady had a right to expect it, and did await it with a growing impatience or yearning, which increased from day to day, as her position grew daily more false and equivocal; yet she had too much pride to avow her expectations to any living soul, not excepting her father.

Mr. Masterton's affairs were in a critical position, and did not admit of much trifling. His personal debts had become very heavy and pressing; they circled him around; he was, in fact, under notice of arrest from one quarter, and was obliged to give up two of his agencies from inability to attend to their duties. He was naturally impatient to see his daughter married, and mistress of Castle Craigh; and he made some attempts to bring the Major to book; but, with all his swagger, poor Mr. Masterton was not habitually at his ease with a man so solvent as the Major. He was a little overawed by him, and feared by any precipitation to lose the good catch which offered itself.

"The Major is a slow bird ; we must wait and face it out, Madge. He was always a slow bird. He can afford to wait, and so can we, Madge, a little longer."

Then she would toss her head proudly, and say, "I'm sure I don't know what you mean. *I* am not waiting."

So she said in her pride ; but she *was* waiting, and with far more eagerness than her father.

When she received this last very unequivocal repulse from the most distinguished ladies of their acquaintance, Mr. Masterton laid it to heart, and looked wistfully at the Major. He took an opportunity, and spoke out at last.

"I should be very glad, Major," he said, "if you would put it in my power to set Madeline right with her friends."

"How do you mean, Masterton?" said the Major, with defensive hauteur.

"Ah—well—you have been very attentive to Madeline, Major ; your attentions have been generally observed ; and though *I* am quite satisfied that they are straightforward and honourable—

upon my sacred word of honour I never doubted them for a moment"—(he threw back the lapels of his coat)—“yet, you see, the ladies won't suspend their judgment.” He showed all his radiant teeth.

“And what do you want, Masterton? Let me understand you fully, and I shall be guided by your wishes. Excuse me, old fellow, but you must know well that you are not likely to muster at your picnic many eligible gentlemen. You cannot command them; they are much harder to come by than the hampers; and the ladies know this very well. Of course you get refusals from them all.”

The man that was black-balled in three clubs did not at all see that he had not as good a circle of gentlemen, members of parliament, cabinet-ministers, by Jove, sir, as any commoner in England. The Major trod upon a very tender point there. Mr. Masterton inserted his thumbs into his waistcoat at each shoulder, and strode up and down the room. He began to feel that the best thing to be done in this dilemma was to get angry.

"Well, Masterton, to the point," said the Major. "I am quite free to say that on the slightest expression of your wishes I shall cease to intrude myself upon you; and—I am very happy to have had it in my power to oblige you—"

"You do me the greatest injustice—you do, upon my sacred word of honour. Say no more about it. I am always delighted to see you here, I'm sure; and I am quite ready to acknowledge that you have acted very handsomely to me. But, as Madeline's father, I have responsibilities, sir."

"No doubt you have," said the Major, laughing. "You look like a paterfamilias in that blue-frock and patent-leathers. Why, my dear sir, you look far more like Madge's bloodish young brother, who is bound to bully all her admirers. Ha! ha! ha!"

Miss Masterton was a ghost. All her friends had fled from her save one—her guardian-angel; he was faithful still.

The father was not much at home these times. The fact was, he was never quite at ease with the Major, who had a somewhat unconcealed con-

tempt for him. Still, like Dame Quickly, the Major did not like swaggerers. Mr. Masterton cultivated the society of young men, and among them he was Oracle. He used to meet a set of them at Evans's, after the theatres, arrayed in his beautifully-cut evening clothes, well displayed in front from a widely-opened zephyr overall. Tossing his lemon-coloured kids in his hat, he would sit and sup with them, commanding their attention and laughter as he told of his dissolute gallantries, real or fabulous—his scandalous legends of himself and my lady when my lord was at his shooting-box in Scotland. A showy blackguard fallen in years, he was highly entertaining, and told his stories most dramatically; his bad knowledge of life was taken by his audience for philosophy. This is the invariable mistake of young men, to think that a short career of vice, a visit to thieves' kitchens, and a romance in St. John's Wood villas is seeing life. Well, it is a view of life, but not more profound than they had when they robbed orchards and got well birched.

Masterton was up to any lark which did not

violate the conventional code of honour. He would issue forth to wrench-off knockers and double-up policemen with a set of jolly young dogs, as he was not. He would advise and encourage them in their callow gallantries; and in a gentlemanly sort of way teach them how to sin discreetly. The man was as "fast" as them himself. He was doing the wretched thing, the ghastly thing of sowing his wild oats at forty-five.

Yet Mr. Masterton was not tabooed; ladies bowed to him as they might bow to St. Ig—s. He was secretary to the Ladies' Archery Society; he was a frequent steward at select public balls. He had a social existence, while his poor daughter was but a melancholy ghost—a ghost in her jewels, or her patches—a ghost with her genius, which was still striving, burrowing up to light.

There is this law in the nature of the tabooed—to strive, to wrestle, to wriggle up to light and conspicuity, though they be throned upon a pilory, and the crown they plait for their brows be a crown of thorns. To begin with a strong

instance: There was little Pansy (let us call her), who ran away from her father, a sober Presbyterian clergyman, and played hop-sotch with her prospects. First, Miss Pansy must electrify the provincial public by charging a regiment in Phoenix Park on her bay mare, thereby getting an ugly toss and breaking her collar-bone. Next, she must astonish the London public by horse-whipping a gentleman in Rotten Row—she a mere bird not seven stone weight. What was her next appearance? Hie presto! change!—she came upon us as a preaching Magdalen, and, I have no doubt, sincere.

There was that *divorcée*, whose secretest life was opened-up before us at our breakfast-table and conned curiously by our wives and daughters—she so beautiful, witty, and frank—so popular till she fell under taboo and vanished. She could not lie peaceably in her grave, but a gifted ghost she must issue pamphlets and poetry year by year, and would not let us forget her. At last she must come to town with her protector, who worked all his extensive influence to get her received; en-

treating, bribing, flattering; but society would not have her—matured, witty, and charming though she was. It would not break its Median law—and she lived and died a ghost without the walls.

With most of these unhappy spirits, their efforts are in vain; they must cast their lot with gentlemen or vanish—poor importunate ghosts as they are—no one knows whither.

My facetious friend Mr. Pimpernel, whose memory is a perfect Golgotha of decayed reputations, put me in the horrors the other day by his modern instances. I also, and doubtless my readers, can recall many more.

There, only the other day taboo had a victim in the very van of womankind—one indeed to be pitied and respected still—who for some juvenile indiscretion, not to be ranked as sin, suffered the ban, and is drifting away, for aught I know, out of sight and mind.

Need we point to that theatrical celebrity who made her way to the houses of some ladies, and whom ladies still delight to *see*, but who of them would *know* her now? I was standing only a few

months ago by the stage-door of a fashionable theatre, and I saw her offer a set-down in her (?) carriage to an obscure chip of a matron, also an actress.

“*Your* carriage?—thank you, no!” said the disdainful owner of a reputation, who drove home forthwith in a prudent cab. What a stab was in that word, *your* carriage!

There, again, was that brilliant hostess, that ornament to society—nay, that jewel in Belgravia’s ear, ten years ago—Mrs. ——; but you remember her. Somehow one morning her name got into the newspapers, and it was not for a ball or for her train at the levée; and soon after she left home, children and husband, for life. No lady ever bowed to her again.

Where be her matinées now—her tableaux-vivants and her picnics? Where has she hung up her bow and quiver?—whither has she carried her well-aimed airy compliments, her tact, her sunny badinage, and her *aplomb*? Her church-goings and her character did not save her. They are past and unremembered—with those select

little dinners, French cookery, choice wine—which so attached to her her select friends—past and forgotten with those bounteous ball-suppers for the Cupids and Psyches—so showy, so bad, and so economical, but good enough for dancing-folk. Let us waft a sigh after the rich wardrobe worth 2000*l.*—on whose backs have those satins and velvets got? And the jewel-case exhibited by her in the Crystal Palace, and vying with the jewelry of queens—in what Jew's window do its contents glitter? The comet and its nucleus passed away, so did she and her finery; but the comet will return before we see *her* again. Haply she is now a discontented ghost on some bleak bank—wringing her hands for evermore.

There, again, was that plaintively-pretty girl, so shy or sly—I cannot say which now—with a face like Carlotta Patti, and a sweet soprano too, suited to sugary ballets and pastoral melody; and indeed she was asked out extensively for her pretty trilling voice. How innocent she looked as she stood at the piano before a whole roomful in her simple light muslin, and sang with, oh,

such heavenly demureness, "*I would I were a daisy, if I might be a flower!*"

Alas! the passion-flower and she were more akin. There was a black-eyed burly cavalry-officer who used to turn over her music for her and dance with her half-a-dozen times in succession, and talky-talky with her in corners all the night long. Doubtless he could tell us the whole story.

Where is she gone?—what is she now? She sunk and vanished out of the sunshine, and left nothing but breath-bubbles behind her. Where be her confidential little lisps now—her delicious little hypocrisies—her bouquets and her honeyed bird-songs? Where be the enchanting little smiles and trips and glides, the prattle, the dear little fibs and the mischievous quizzing of the old maids? Methinks could we find her and bring her to their feet to-day, she would clasp them sobbing. We cast her from our sacred bulwarks this many a year. We sternly executed the sentence, and she is dead to society for ever—swept away on the wave of taboo. It would not be pleasant or

edifying to us now if some day (?) she returned to our sight and passed us, a ghostly spectacle, as the body of Caraccioli appeared to Nelson—saying to us in her silence: “You have made me thus!”

CHAPTER IV.

WAITING FOR SOMEBODY. THE BLOOD OF THE HOWARDS.

A SIGNAL misfortune had befallen the house of Masterton, namely, its elegant head had been clipped clean off from the stalk one morning, in all its unsuspecting bloom. To leave figures of speech, we have to state that Mr. Masterton was arrested not far from his own hall-door, attired in his best new Poole, his D'Orsay trousers, patent-leather boots, primrose kid gloves, and all the rest of it. The circumstances were simply these :

Lady Cloudesley, a lady of a fast and liberal reputation, which was getting a little blown upon, had been prevailed upon to invite Miss Masterton and her father to a *matinée*.

Mr. Masterton and his daughter were gratified

according to their respective natures, and the invitation of course accepted.

Both of them had been living strictly home-lives of late; Madeline for reasons with which we are well acquainted, and her father from danger of arrest. He had been absolutely obliged to give up his agency from want of the needful solvency, and was engaged in a correspondence with all his "powerful friends," beseeching for this place or that, whenever a vacancy seemed to open. Of his business qualities there could be no doubt; he was clever in all men's affairs save his own. He lived at home, then, of late, and wrote and looked much out of the window; sometimes recognising an official gentleman waiting for him round the corner, and beckoning him, would inquire with mock politeness at what hour the packet sailed for France, as he was quite ready to start.

This invitation to the *matinée* tempted the old butterfly out on his sunbeam, having this great object in view,—to insinuate his daughter once more into her proper place in society, and to break up this ban and this excommunication.

About two hours, then, before the appointed hour he had a cab brought down the stable-lane, and he slipped into it with his daughter through the empty stable.

Madeline was rustling in her silk and lace; Mr. Masterton was an exquisite, all creaseless and perfumed. The happy cabman rattled them down the paving-stones, and was just turning the street, when he was stopped by a gentleman in tweed, whilst another gentleman in worn doeskin looked in at the window, and laid his soiled hand on Mr. Masterton's superfine Poole.

To be brief, then, poor Miss Masterton was presently handed out of the cab by her father at their own hall-door, and that gentleman stepped into the vehicle again with fallen cheek; whilst, instead of the lovely companion who lately occupied the seat by his side, the man in greasy doeskin took his place with a familiar respect. These two drove away to their dreary destination, and Madeline entered her ruined home sobbing.

That evening she got a cheerful note from her father; and I believe,—I *fear* she found other

comfort, into which we shall not examine. We will just close our eyes and forget her till we meet her again next morning, as she sits at her easel painting, with but one companion, a little child pure as snow. It had been well for her had she only kept such innocent company ; but now—can it be only our fancy?—she seems ill at ease under its full unquestioning gaze from the pillow on which its head is laid. Her nerves are out of order to-day ; she has not that zeal and interest in her painting which of late she had. This picture has been her solace for weeks back, absorbing her cares in its keen and living interest. There was hope in it, and a future in it.

She commenced this selfsame picture in a spirit of sulk and pride with the world, and a resolution to prove her supremacy over the host of insipid women who now trampled on her, but had once made her world. As she painted she used but lately to build pride-castles in the clouds. She would realise those future afternoons to come when the carriages should be drawn up in Trafalgar Square, and the fashionable crowd would

saunter up and down along the pictures, making their languid parrot-criticisms, till some picture of mark awoke them from criticism to modest wonder, and they gathered there like bees. She ventured to believe that her picture might be one of these last; and then—oh, that proud “*then!*”—how the truth and pathos of her creation would force her name to their lips again and momentarily, till they felt that *she* was stronger, deeper, ay purer than they. She has often hummed to herself—we smile at her as we relate it—the proud and feeling air,

“On parlera de sa gloire.”

But now what change and blight is this? Has love suddenly swallowed up ambition? has sorrow drowned it? She dabs on her colour with meaningless touch, and then angrily wipes out her work with the rag.

“You are crying, miss,” lisped little Susy, the model whom she had always encouraged to converse; “your eyelids is red.”

“Only red-paint, Susy. Never mind looking at me, dear; put your head farther back.”

“Who supped wi’ you last night, miss?” said the child, with a very unmannerly abruptness.

A most becoming crimson came into Miss Masterton’s cheeks at the question,—a very uncalled-for demonstration before a mere babe. The servant had indeed forgotten to remove the glasses on the little inlaid table upon which, no doubt, her friend Miss Teague the flower-painter joined her in a little supper. They were old gossips and comrades; they had painted in Kensington, at Newman Street together; and it is quite Miss Teague’s habit to run over in the evenings. Miss Masterton, without replying, got up quietly and laid the things out of sight. When she took her seat again, that becoming bloom had faded from her face.

Well, then, if there was red-paint on Miss Masterton’s eyelids, which we doubt, there was certainly also a green streak on her forehead, and little purple smudges on her brow, whither her fingers went up perpetually, in the gesture of pained thought. Her hair was one wild writhe, and looked dusty and dim. Indeed, she was the

very statuesque image of slovenly despair, all drooping and aimless for ever.

"Do you smoke, miss?" asked this pertinacious little busybody.

"Why?" asked the lady, sternly.

The child put out its mite of a finger, and pointed to a cigar-ash on the floor :

"Father smokes cigars, miss, and I sees just like that after him."

"Hold your tongue," said Miss Masterton, sternly; "shut your eyes and lie still."

For a few minutes the child was awed, and lay quite silently with its lids shut; but it had been so spoiled by the lady's kindness and pleasant manner of talk that it soon recovered its vivacity.

"Is the picture of the sandy man finished yet?" asked the innocent imp. Miss Masterton was stonily silent.

It was about eleven o'clock, and suddenly, as if to inspirit her, joyful marriage-bells rang out. She listened to them, and suffered them for a while; then, as if they flouted her, up she starts and walks like one distracted up and down the

room. Her loaded brushes drop from her hands, and she tramples on them repeatedly as she hurries backwards and forwards.

Nothing but nerves, ladies. Painters and authors raise a clamour at such choral rows, street-organs and church-bells and the like; their nerves, continually on the strain, are thrown into spasms at such cruel disturbances. Let us not for a moment be surprised at her agitation when assailed by these awful chimes.

Marriage-bells are, in my judgment, a devilish device, ominous of future discord. Give us the cooing of the wood-pigeons if you will, and the dulcet tinklings of harps; let the groomsmen toodle upon flutes, and the bridesmaids warble an epithalamium-hymn. But at a moment of supreme anxiety and over-weighted nerve—with our fate, as it were, in our hands, and not yet recognised—to be deafened and dizzied and almost shaken out of our coats by those fast and frantic peals!

Just as at that other ceremonial,—where the trimmings are black instead of white, and the

sprigs are fennel instead of orange-blossom, and the bridegroom is represented by the worthy Mr. Calcraft,—we try to aggravate the horrors to the felon's nerves by our ghostly ding-dongs, and our host of staring ragamuffins; so, precisely, we set a poor isolated couple palpitating by the dirty crowd awaiting them at the church-railings, and by the guffaws of these bells. The walls of Jericho might fall down before these rampant marriage-bells.

Miss Masterton, of course, started from her seat in a sudden accession of nerves; and as they pealed and mercilessly clashed over her, not the breadth of a street away, she really looked frantic, as if a thunderstorm were hanging right over her poor head.

"Ain't they pretty, miss?" said the child, who, like all juveniles, loved noise,—“Ain't they pretty—the pretty marriage-bells, miss?”

“They will *never* ring for me,” she cried, bursting into a shower of tears, and sinking on a chair.

Nerves, ladies—nothing but nerves. Just as

we print "no cards" nowadays in our marriage-announcement, she is resolved to be married in quiet, and hates these marriage-bells. And she is right; she shall have the toodling and the cooing and a sequestered spot, and be spared these foolish accessions of nerves.

With the timely burst of tears (of course merely hysterical) she seemed a little relieved, and rising, she went to the window, which was darkened by the half-shutters. She opened them, and looked out for a while. By and by she saw the carriages begin to drive past with their crimp and smiling occupants, and at the sight it seemed as if another stormy wave of nerves or regret or envy—we scarce know what—seemed to rush over her. Again she starts up, waywardly sweeps across the room, to the astonishment of the staring child, and hurries downstairs. Really her mind seems quite helmless to-day, drifting and beating among the breakers.

The card-salver still lay upon the hall-table. She took a handful of them and scattered them out, so as to see the names. The Honourable

Mrs. and Misses —. How they swept by her at the flower-show, dressed like tiger-lilies! They that used to flatter and caress her, they who took favours from her once. Mrs. and Miss —, to whom she wrote a nice little note of inquiry about that invalid brat Tommy. The note was answered indeed, but coldly, in the third person; it was a worse snub than silence. There was the card of a countess, an authoress; and so on. Not one of them will ever leave a card again. The footman's thundering knock will never come to the door, or the simpering gracious dames of fashion sail in to patronise her. But there lay their names before her in glossy array, and she turned them over for a while with curling lip and swelling heart. At length she seemed to sicken at the sight. She caught up her dress, swept them into it, and brought them upstairs to the bright stove, as if to burn them to ashes. The lady was in a pet with the serene world because it veiled its countenance from her; as if a child were to pout and chide the cloud that hides from it the moon. These cards represented to her the scornful un-

grateful world, and she opened a bright place in the stove to make a holocaust of them.

"Give 'em to me, miss," said the child, seeing her clutch up a handful to destroy them. The angry lady paused, looked at the soiled little bib that was cradled out to receive the dainty paste-board, and with a smile she emptied the heap into Susy's lap. It satisfied her writhing pride to think that these compliments, these formal tenders of acquaintance, these dainty proxies, which convey with them and about them, like perfume, high and aristocratic associations, should be the playthings of dirty children on the filthy floors of St. Giles's. She paid the child and dismissed her.

Miss Masterton then went up to her own room, and washed her face and hands. The paint came freely out and left no stain, all but that "red-paint" from the eyelids; that she could not remove. She smoothed her Medusa-head into shining trim, and put on her neatest morning attire. She put on her bonnet and shawl, and taking up a light carpet-bag she proceeded down-

stairs in all her haggard loveliness, the beauty of dress redoubling the beauty of person; but somehow the mien of a king's daughter was gone from her step. She seemed drooping and agitated.

Within the studio again, she laid down her bag, and was seized with deep abstraction. She kept standing in the middle of the room musing, as still and as steadfast as if it were her lay-figure in a pose. Then she looked at her watch hastily; in a moment again forgot she had consulted it, and looked again, and abstractedly once again before five minutes had gone by; then there came such a heavy sigh as if body and soul were parting; and going to the window, she sat down, despondingly, with her eyes fixed heavily upon the wall. There are piteous looks on a woman's face which are very painful to see, and remain on the mind of the observer when the occasion which called them up has been forgotten. Again, with a start, she looked at her watch, and hurriedly gazed below on the pavement at the sound of a step going by. She seemed to be waiting for

somebody; and we too will wait and watch with her compassionately.

By and by she glanced at her breast, and missing the presence, as it were, of something that ought to be there, she starts up, goes out, and upstairs to her bedroom in great haste, as we have seen an over-anxious hostess, who, sitting down to repose under the impression that she has completed every arrangement, suddenly remembers some important omission which may mar the feast.

Again this restless creature returns, and a brooch is now on her breast, which was not there before; a red cornelian heart pierced by a golden arrow is the device. Perhaps it may be a lover's token; and with feminine trust in small significances, she prepares herself thus for her expected visitor.

She put by the glasses and plates, and swept away the cigar-ashes. As she was returning to her seat she had to pass her picture, and she paused and gazed at it with lack-lustre eyes.

Art, nothing like Art, for gentle solace and

relief. It is the true antidote to the virus of the passions—the anodyne to all mental inflammation. Let her keep the brush in her hand and her eyes on the dream she has fixed on canvas, and then let its gentle ambition absorb her thoughts. There need be no fitful efforts, between which come the draughtings of care; no voluntary striving for comfort, sweet and unbidden. The charm shall work upon the rebellious spirit, and the ache be stilled. Alas, she takes her picture roughly up, and turns its face to the wall. Can it be, then, that there are moods and situations in which our panacea Art will not work? She went away to the window, and sat there brooding. A young and proud spirit fed on hope, and looking upon the life before it as some glorious tropic parallel unexplored, rife with adventure and pleasure, may get a fall from which there is no recovery, and find that its future is lost beyond recall. Henceforth it must train itself to think and feel like the old in the present alone; or, indeed, resolve to quit life. Miss Masterton is a young lady upon whom we cannot calculate further. There are

ugly symptoms, we must even confess at last, in this restless and feverish melancholy. Has *she* thrown away her future? Must she think as the unhappy old must think of this hard bleak present alone? Pounds' worth of spoiled paint-encrusted brushes lay scattered about the floor; old palettes beyond cleaning and use, painting-rags foul and sticky, were heaped in the corners, and her smudge-pan upset, the oil soaking through the boards; her lay-figure kneeled in a corner, as if engaged in speechless prayer everlasting; cobwebs festooned the corners of the window-panes, which the half-shutters had concealed for many months, and large sleeping spiders began to stir. The pictures were all turned to the wall, and showed the blank canvas backs—all save one, a sinister-looking gentleman with sunken eyes, and a smile which lurked under his thin red moustache.

Dreary is the temple when the oracle is departed. All this dirt and wretchedness never offended her sight, indeed wholly escaped it, whilst she was inspired with the jubilant pride of art. But the god, it seems, has left his ruined

shrine to-day, and the priestess mopes among the ashes.

A double-knock came to the door, and startled away her thoughts, as a gun-shot disperses a rookery. She noiselessly opened the window and looked out, with her hands upon the sill, but the portico of the hall-door concealed the visitor, and she capriciously drew back to conceal herself, lest her eager figure might be seen. She heard the hall-door open, she heard a man's voice, and she listened to it like a startled deer: then the hall-door closed, and a step ascended the stairs. The lady composed herself to an indifferent attitude, and set her quivering lips to the fixed and sullen line of pride. When the door opened she sat thus, with a storm of reproach perhaps suppressed at her heart, or perhaps only a cold jest ready to fly from her tongue; or will she meet this guest in the strength and power of silence? But if she can do that, she is more than a woman.

The maid-servant it was who stood at the door. She came across to her mistress with a pretty little note—a scented billet, held in her apron.

“Left by a gentleman, miss.”

Miss Masterton took it quickly, and opened it under the servant's eyes. It was blank paper within, and there dropt from it on her lap *a lock of her own auburn hair!*

CHAPTER V.

POOR LITTLE MRS. BLENHEIM.

THE deepest schemes, like most conundrums, look silly and obvious enough when seen through at last. How shallow seems the best-laid combination when it lies exposed and defeated! Had it been stamped by success, indeed, we wonder and applaud it for ever. The result is its only measure.

Here was poor Mrs. Blenheim, who led in triumph to her house a wealthy and most gracious bachelor, and placed him at her daughter's feet; who struck the chain from that daughter's hand at one masterly blow, and cleared every obstacle from her path; who, finding that the baronet was a little stupid, and did not readily "take" where she directed him, adapting herself to circumstances, permitted him temporarily to fasten where he pleased, and actually allowed herself

at her age to be led into a flirtation with a hardened old bachelor rather than let him drift from her house and be elsewhere caught up. Ultimately she had faith that her pretty Milly, constantly dangling before him, must prove irresistible. Alas, she knew not the class to which her "innocent" belonged.

One humiliating day, after a vigorous campaign had lasted some weeks and imaginary advances been made, Mr. Pimpernel wished to see her for a little private conversation. He had a statement to make which had to be wrapt up with great tact, and just half-told, no more. It had to be heralded in with a joke or two, and itself treated with a mere smile; but it came upon Mrs. Blenheim with weight and severity nevertheless. He had to tell her that that absurd little chaffinch Sir Hugh was making her ridiculous, and vaunting at his club his conquest of the charming little widow, the Saint Cecilia. Indeed, that he had the impertinence to go into frequent raptures upon "her foot"!

"Sir Hugh, ma'am, is a petrification, a stalac-

tite old bachelor, a plump little Narcissus in love with his own reflection."

"Poor little conceited creature, how absurd!" said Mrs. Blenheim, with an admirable assumption of amused pity, but moved notwithstanding, for she changed colour.

"Now I'm an old bachelor, ma'am, but I belong to another order of celibacy altogether. I've been wax before your sex, ma'am."

"How absurd!" smiled Mrs. Blenheim. "You know he has been here on mere toleration, we found him such a good-natured soul; but I must really pretend to be affronted, and forbid him the house. Milly and I were beginning to feel his visits and his egotism rather a nuisance. But I am quite sorry, really; for he was such an amiable old butterfly, was he not?"

"He's a butterfly, I can assure you, ma'am, grown children run after, and will never catch."

"Well, really, I can only laugh at your bit of gossip. I pardon my little gentleman. You know he is really so shockingly vulgar: it is his way of showing gratitude. But

those wretched copies of his—really, Mr. Pimpernel, I begin to feel it wrong encouraging his delusions. Suppose you tell him that I thought his St. Cecilia a vile piece of sign-painting, copied by some decorator's apprentice. I leave it all to you," she said, with a gesture of complete indifference: "tell him something—any thing you please!"

This was all the notice she took of the matter; but she was disappointed, and, further, her taste was hurt: the vulgarity of the situation rather revolted her. She had never looked upon herself in the character of a charming widow; and all her associations with such a part were low. The imputation, innocent though it was, made her a little sick. We do not say but that there may have entered her heart at moments the thought that if Sir Hugh proved utterly obdurate to Milly's charms, rather than let that beautiful place drift into other hands, she might smile upon his suit herself. This I dare only conjecture. It was probably rather an involuntary idea than a scheme. Now, however, the whole fabric of the goodly con-

spiracy sunk before the lively intelligence that Sir Hugh was captivated neither by Milly nor by herself, but by—her foot! She felt naturally disgusted and insulted, and immediately relinquished all pursuit. From henceforth her whole combination began to break up rapidly, like the dissolution of a beautiful iceberg.

The very next day came John Wayre. He slipped up to the drawing-room, telling the little maid to say to Miss Brown that a gentleman wished to see her.

Down came the kindly soul in a flutter. It was many a day since a gentleman had come to see *her*, and to frighten her out of her ivy-bush; but when she found it was only her friend and favourite John Wayre, she brightened and beamed upon him. She immediately divined that he had come to seek a reconciliation with Milly, and the gentle jesuitry of the old maid awoke at once. She arranged how she would bring them together, and what preparation she would give Milly of his presence in the drawing-room.

“She is very proud, and her pride is the only

difficulty; so we must take it by surprise; we must come upon it when it is asleep. Milly is at the drawing-school to-day; but I expect her home every moment. I will meet her in the hall, and tell her to call in the drawing-room on her way up to look at some new music—don't you see?—she is anxiously expecting a new song—”

“And would meet disappointment,” smiled Wayre, finishing her sentence. “You say she is coming home. I'll meet her by the way, and see her at least to the door.”

He spoke with determination; and Miss Brown, his old and staunch ally in times as rough as these, gave in with ominous shakings of the head, and an unbelief in any step taken in such a delicate love-quarrel that was not supported by an innocent feminine artifice.

“Milly is very angry with you,” she said, as he was leaving the room.

John went out into the street again, and, knowing the way to the drawing-school, he walked leisurely along, expectant.

John Wayre's mind had been under a strong

morbid action, which had tinctured and distorted all his feelings. He had aggravated the disease by living completely alone and brooding. Efforts to work were vain. You may saddle the mind for a journey, place her on the road and direct her head; but she will not stir a step without the will to go. The society of men had disagreed with him; their flippant hard talk had irritated his oppression instead of diverting it. Ladies' society was fairly intolerable. It had become pretty generally known among his lady-friends that he was engaged; and immediately that charming access of familiarity, that petting and tender little patronage, had been directed upon him—attentions beyond misconstruction now, and a very agreeable exercise to the female nature. This gentle implied congratulation, these approving pats upon the back (so to speak), sickened poor Wayre. All allusions to his clouded happiness drove the poor man half-wild: he thought Milly unworthy and untrue. Now, however, since he had received a certain communication, which the reader may not have forgotten, the burden had suddenly fallen from his

back, the scales from his eyes ; and here he comes to fling himself at the lady's feet, and confess his happy return to light and faith.

At the turn of the street he suddenly encountered Milly, her portfolio under her arm, coming along with her light independent step. He greeted her, and turned to accompany her home.

Now in the exposed street John Wayre had a great advantage, which, without any compunction, he took. Milly was obliged to be very quiet. She was caught and yet could not turn at bay. She could not whisk out of his sight and clap a door behind her ; nor could she indulge in a lofty and assumed repulse : in whatsoever mood she might be, she must listen. John began very quietly, yet with the confidence of an orator to an adverse audience, who opens calmly, knowing the fire and force he has in reserve and the merits of his cause.

"You have been very justly offended with me," he murmured ; "and I have come to make an apology, and be very humble."

"We had better not talk of it in the street,"

she said coldly, and repelling his offer to carry the portfolio.

They walked side by side to the door, preserving rather an awkward silence; the lady looking very proud, and the gentleman very humble—a very picturesque little couple indeed, had an artist been there to sketch them—quite a history in their faces.

Arrived at the door, Milly managed to run up the steps first and knock. Then she turned to her companion, and said,

“I have brought you out of your way, Mr. Wayre. I suppose it is useless to ask you in?”

On the contrary, Mr. Wayre explained he had come especially to see her, and had met her by intent; so Milly had nothing else for it but to make a little bow, and, when the door was opened, lead the way into the parlour. She laid her portfolio on the beaufet, and stood upon the hearth-rug to hear him, the very picture of cold estrangement.

“I am come to humble myself,” he said; “I was not in my right mind when I wrote you such

an unjust, and I feel unpardonable, letter. I hope you will duly allow for all the circumstances under which it was written."

"Mr. Wayre," she said, "I quite allowed for your feelings and position; but do you consider that a sufficient excuse for making a gratuitous accusation and assuming such a high tone of reproach?"

Wayre paused, as was his custom, to think before he spoke.

"If I had cared for you less, I should certainly have been more deliberate," said he, restraining himself yet a while; "my very affection blinded me."

"A very singular shape your affection took, I must say. You did not even flatter me so much as to doubt, but accused me quite unheard."

"The accusation was unjust, very unjust," said John gently; "but yet was it not an invitation to you to exculpate yourself?"

"Do you think I would stoop to that? You mistook me very much indeed."

"I am come to apologise and not to recri-

minate. In these questions I believe the first in fault is the only culprit. You say you can allow for the pain and irritation of my position, Milly. A man who offered me the greatest insult conceivable from man to man actually found his way to the house. I knew you had been acquainted with him, and even on friendly terms. I remembered that you had tried to influence me not to prosecute him—”

“Don’t remind me of that; you make matters worse,” said Milly, drawing up her little finger proudly.

“Then all I will say is this,—that now I see my mistake, and am full of repentance, and no penance you can impose will be too sore for me to undergo, except continued estrangement from you. I have no other motive or care or desire in this life to-day but to win back your love.”

“Love! hem!” said Milly; “I don’t know about that; and pray might I ask what has caused this alteration in your convictions? To what am I to owe this generous acquittal?”

"I said I was come to humble myself, and I will not shrink from one fraction of my penance." He placed the letter from Chantrey in her hands.

She sat down and read it. "Oh, then," said she, with the scrutiny of a lovely little chief-justice, "you did wait for evidence, after all. It was not at the suggestion of your own mind you came. I had begun to flatter myself it was from your knowledge of me."

"That should have been more than sufficient," said he warmly.

"I thought, Mr. Wayre," she said, with the insidious softness of cruelty, "that I gave you a sufficient test of what I was, to escape suspicion and reproaches. Now it appears I owe this apology to Mr. David Chantrey." Wayre winced. "He is the real mediator between you and me."

"I accept the facts through him; he is not the mediator," he said, with a moment's haughtiness, which he could not restrain. He drew breath, and changed to a perfect ardour of entreaty.

"Forgive me; you made so great a sacrifice for me, that I have unlimited faith in your generosity. Nothing but the remembrance of your noble conduct towards me—"

Milly thawed in a moment. "That will do," she said smiling, and reaching him her hand; "won't mamma be surprised?"

Surprise was no word for poor Mrs. Blenheim's secret feelings, as she entered the room to discover what could be keeping Milly below.

"Only fancy, mamma — John has come to tea," said the little minx, her daughter.

"I really don't know what to say," said Mrs. Blenheim, shaking her head at him; "I had hoped you were cured of your folly."

"Thank you, mamma," said pert Milly: "we could wish Sir Hugh was as foolish as Mr. Wayre. Fancy, John, Sir Hugh could never discover my attractions, all the time he knew me, though I dressed, and smiled, and played, and sang divinely for him."

"Oh, don't talk of that dreadful little bore," said Mrs. Blenheim; and she sighed and shook

her head all that evening. She had not heart enough even to snub the lovers. Napoleon's misery in St. Helena was nothing to hers, sitting at the tea-urn amid the wreck of her schemes.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO BIRDS IN THE BUSH.

SIR HUGH ROWLY had been cautious in making a direct offer to David; when it came it was a handsome one, and beyond our modest friend's hopes. It was proposed by the good baronet that his "honest man" should undertake to manage, as agent, a large property of his, which lay among the lavender-fields of Berkshire. There was a comfortable house and lawn upon it, which should be devoted to his use, and he was to receive a most satisfactory percentage.

It must be acknowledged that Sir Hugh showed great faith in his honest man's capacity in making such an offer, and David in his turn showed a simple faith in accepting it, for it involved the condition that he should at once give up his connection with the press, from which for

so long a time he derived his livelihood. That he might do this the readier, Sir Hugh forced upon him a liberal advance, and even marked out for him some trifling employments as earnest of the engagement.

David had been deriving a precarious livelihood as a reporter for the last eight or ten years, and by his energy and intelligence had become a very useful irregular upon the staff. He could by this time penny-a-line with such vigour, and throw such life into narratives of a public dinner or a university rowing-match, that I really believe on these occasions, when there is a rush for cheap journalism, his paper was considered to contain the fullest and most interesting account, and little newsboys made most profit upon it. The circulation of the paper had gone up—partly, it is possible, from this special recommendation. As a matter of course David was so persuaded, and naturally felt his value. It did not quite please him, then, to find he was expected to do the work of two for the pay of one; and when he sent in a modest demand on pay-day, to find himself

often summarily cut down without the slightest explanation or apology. A meaner spirit, under his natural delusion as to personal value, would have struck for higher salary. He neither complained nor threatened; simply, when another prospect opened on him, he left them, and let fly the bird in his hand.

There was once, and is still, a paper, in the columns of which I used to write a brilliant article, in my own opinion, once a week. I believed myself the main-spring of the whole publication. It fell on a day that the publisher took his editor and myself into confidence, and communicated to us the pleasing intelligence that the *Prometheus* (let us call it) was going up. Whereupon I smiled with complacent abstraction, and certain highly-seasoned paragraphs from my last article wandered into my mind. I drew the editor aside, and with graceful artifice affected to congratulate *him* upon our success as the result of his good taste and sagacity. To my amazement—shall I say disgust?—he quietly accepted the compliment as cold fact.

"Yes," said he; "and look at the injustice of that old fellow" (meaning the publisher): "he means to pay me the same salary, though I have doubled the circulation of his paper."

"Gentlemen," said the publisher, approaching us, "you now have a practical illustration of what a publisher *can* do who has the breadth to design and the capital to apply. There are many publics, gentlemen; not one public. I made choice of a class, and sent all my capital through a single channel. Mark the result."

Soon after this monstrous piece of arrogance, I left the paper; the editor threw up his post in disgust in a few months more, and still the *Prometheus* lived and thrived. Was this a proof that we deceived ourselves as to the source of its vitality? I think not. There is a tripod of heart, brain, and lungs in a paper as well as a man. We all three were probably right enough.

David had accepted an advance from Sir Hugh, and looked forward to a summons to his duties; but that summons, expected from day to day, did not arrive, and his money began to run

low ; but that he had begun to live on liberal credit in matters of meat and groceries, it had been quickly expended.

Since those fine prospects opened to him, old Mr. Chantrey treated him with a singular and marked respect. His rough and mocking spirit subsided ; he began to consult with him as an equal upon all matters ; to converse on politics and daily news with a gratifying solemnity ; and, highest testimony of all, he even suffered himself to talk over past times and olden prosperity, when he was a man of some business importance and a county magistrate.

Ben was a study : he suddenly, on comprehending the news, woke up from his lethargy. It was a startling and not altogether pleasant resurrection of the poor mummy. With the watery fire of age in his eyes, he became vigilantly obsequious to his young master. He dressed himself in his best suit of threadbare black cloth, with a huge white necktie, and brushed up his thistle-down head into a sort of venerable smartness, and then from time to time he laid wait to catch David

alone. He caught him frequently, for kind old Davy would not avoid him; and Ben reiterated on some twenty different occasions certain tremulous petitions. Painfully straightening his old back, he would hint that he was still open to service and promotion; this idea seemed to have seized on him like a mania.

“Any thing in the respectable line of clerk or scrivener with a salary—a salary!” he cried, with a spritish gleaming of his old eyes. “I lost all my little store by your father, Master Davy. I don’t blame him. I never threw no complaint at him. A hundert pound, Master Davy,—an’ I knew the look of every bright sovereign as a shepherd knows his sheep,—gone! But I’m able to earn my fortin yet, Master Davy, bless your heart! you just try me. I’m bright to work yet. I was gettin’ a bad habit of sleepin’; but look at me now—not a wink on me! I’ve as much work in me as when I was twenty. There’s a specimen of my copper-plate hand, Master Davy.” He held forth some shaky lines of round-hand with a farcical pathos of tone which

almost moistened David's eyes. "You see," Mr. Davy," he said in a whimpering whisper, "I want to lay by—to lay by—to lay by a trifle against I grow old and helpless, Mr. Davy."

David amused the poor old Daddy Spindle with promises, knowing well that this was only a flicker in the old socket, which must soon fall again.

Happy David to have such a devotee, and to possess such an excellent foundation for respect and devotion as Sir Hugh's golden promises. But those promises and prospects, we are humiliated to say, were as a feast before a sick man. He had no pleasure in them.

The fact was, our robust friend never knew what true misery was before. He was in that state, that to look down the road leading to the Wertleys' place gave him a qualm of despair from his throat right down to his heart. A dash of sunshine upon the road, a cloud on the hills, a rook winging away to a vanishing point, bred in his mind fantastic misery which he could not cope with.

There were really so many grave and solid subjects of consideration surrounding him : for instance, these brightening prospects ; his sister's illness ; the failure of the book which had been to him these many years a sort of creed. These were ranged around him, and yet he dreams of miseries among the clouds. He struggled against this growing oppression, and could cast it from him for a period : but these tyrannous sinkings and sufferings laid wait for him like harpies ; seizing him at corners, and tearing at his heart, and filling him with that deadly selfishness of misery only analogous to sea-sickness in half a gale.

The result of all his broodings was still this alone—that Emmie was the kindest, most winsome of ladies that ever chance threw on a rough fellow's rough road in life ; and that she was lost to him without hope and for ever. He had done that act of acts which alone she could never pardon ; which alone could convert all her gentle friendship into absolute disgust. He had not now that secret approval of the act, as just and war-

ranted, which supported him while his blood was up and his zeal aflame. He now felt it to have been unjustifiable and savage, wholly unworthy of the memory of that gentle one for whose sake he had done it.

There came a very cordial letter from old Wertley about this time, announcing to him that he was now alone, and that he would be charmed to see him at his house again. In his guileless egotism, the old gentleman really seemed to think that his company was the only attraction which his house possessed for Chantrey. The whole letter was ampler than it need be, and couched with studious cordiality, which was intended obviously to smother all reluctance and anger that might exist in David's mind; but, simple man, instead of throwing water upon the flame which tormented our unhappy hero, he unconsciously poured boiling pitch.

"You are not perhaps aware," continued this propitiating epistle, "that you sowed the seeds of an obligation with both my daughter and me, which is only now beginning to put forth leaves:

I allude to the introduction with which you favoured us to your friend Major de Lindesey. My daughter, who, as you are aware, has been in Scotland for the last week staying with an aunt, actually finds herself not more than two miles from Castle Craigh; and was quite agreeably surprised to meet the Major at a dinner. He has been paying her every attention in his power. My sister, indeed, is rather particular, and would not accept his pressing invitations to a bachelor establishment; but the Major comes in and out as he pleases, and has arranged a pleasant party to some fine old ruins in the neighbourhood, which interested Sir Walter Scott, and bear the poet's initials. Don't interpret all this into gossip; it would not be worth communicating to you, but that there is a certain coincidence in Emmie's meeting your friend down there, and a positive obligation that she should have owed the pleasure of his acquaintance to you. Do you remember, in a late argument we had, my admitting for a moment that my large Etruscan vase might, from its shape, have been an *œnochoe*, or peculiar wine-

jug? I have since found out you *were wrong*. It is, as I argued, a *bombytias*.—Yours in all friendship.”

David was shocked as he laid down the letter : the old gentleman's joy, it appeared, was the young man's torture ; Mr. Wertley was quite unconsciously in the attitude of a genial old angler, drawing the writhing worm on his hook without the faintest idea that he was giving pain.

Chantrey was of that large and liberal nature in which jealousy is not allied to hatred. He knew that he had forfeited all claim to Emmie's hand ; and, had a good and worthy gentleman stepped in to claim it, he could have found it in his heart to wish him joy, and probably made a good recovery ; but that a cowardly villain—no weaker phrase would satisfy his altered mood—should win the prize for which he would stake his life, was beyond all sufferance. It was he who introduced this man to the family, as worthy of their acquaintance ; he considered it then his imperative duty now to undeceive them.

When a strong motive pays us a visit in such situations, it generally carries two heads under its hood ; one wearing the open aspect of duty, whose voice loudly addresses the ear ; the other of some disguised passion, whose persuasive whisper is only heard by the heart. We only care to recognise the former.

As David was hastening up the road to Mr. Wertley's house, he had upon his mind a sense of the Major's treachery towards him, and a jealousy he could not smother.

Mr. Wertley was at home, and was so charmed to see him, that he offered him both hands, and clapped him on the shoulder as he led him in.

" I am glad you have come. Here I am quite alone, and moping all the morning. Sit down, old friend : you must dine with me to-day." And as he placed Chantrey in his own velvet-backed arm-chair, he clapped him on the shoulder again, and added with a pleasant laugh : " I say, Chantrey, what would Johnny say if he saw you sitting there?"

" I have received your kind letter, sir," said Chantrey quietly.

"Ah! you should see the letter I received this morning," said Mr. Wertley, seating himself with a complacent smile. "I have received a most gratifying invitation from Major de Lindesey, to pay him a visit at Castle Craigh. My daughter and sister-in-law second him very strongly; and the end of the matter is this, that the old governor means to tear himself from his glory-hole the day after to-morrow. You know, my dear Chantrey," he continued more seriously, "really there seems to be something in that business. Here is my sister-in-law's letter just received; and, egad! there are great goings-on. Emmie seems to be the belle of the whole country-side. Under the circumstances, it would be selfish on my part to conceal the light of my countenance from my countrymen. For all we know, we may find ourselves very much indebted to you, Chantrey."

"I have come to wipe out that debt, sir," said Chantrey coldly. "You asked me once, Mr. Wertley, what was my opinion of Major de Lindesey, and I gave you a high one. Since then, I have

reason to know he is a man of no principle and of a bad heart."

Old Wertley looked at him keenly for a moment; then asked in a tone of amazement what had Major de Lindesey done.

Here Chantrey gave a brief account of De Lindesey's cowardly vengeance; how, to use his own peppery language, "he murdered that poor girl's reputation by inches."

"He is not fit to be an acquaintance of your daughter's, much less a suitor."

"Did you ever hear the Scotch proverb, Chantrey," said the undaunted old gentleman, "'The deil tempts a man, but lets a woman gang her ain gait'? I've heard of this Miss Masterton before now, from my daughter and Milly Blenheim—a bold and forward girl, sir. Come, come, come; you've got the wrong end of the story, somehow; a man of family and fortune is hunted by such young ladies; and when they fail to run him down, they spread these stories."

"I heard what I have told you from Major de Lindesey's own lips. No doubt his intentions to

your daughter are honourable in the conventional sense. How could he dare to feel otherwise to one so pure and good? If you think her happiness is secure in the hands of such a man, it does not become me to discuss the question further."

He coldly rose from his seat; but old Wertley laid hands upon his coat-button to detain him, and seemed rather fidgety in his reply :

" Well, well, the matter is not ripe enough for discussion. I am obliged to you for your intention, Chantrey. You are an honest fellow; but you'll observe that even in your own account this woman challenged Major de Lindesey, in the first instance, to a bold flirtation, and he only accepted the challenge. If we investigated such charges, with all this acrimony, what would become of our upper ten thousand, who really make excellent husbands? I would venture to support the assertion that your hardened flirts, male and female, invariably make good domestic husbands and wives; they are cloyed of all the dangerous temptations, and domestic happiness surprises them with its freshness. Come, come, come; the Major

is a right good fellow. In a few years, sir, he will be a peer."

David scarcely credited his ears. Here was this worthy and, let us add, religious old gentleman giving vent to opinions which might have fallen from the lips of De Lindesey himself. The blindness of self-interest had fallen upon him. In another mood of mind poor old Wertley would have reprobated such sentiments; but it is a fact, more absurd than sad, that we can view any given subject in the light and hue of our immediate interest. Of course we give it a mock trial; but our minds are made up as to the conclusion; the very arguments employed against us we can, by an ingenious twist, put forth in our support: if we find it our interest to call the sun the moon, it shall be the moon; and all the more shall it be the moon, because you insist it is the sun.

"You see," said Mr. Wertley, "your argument is the very one by which I support my views. When a man marries, he casts his slough, and is such a different class of being, you cannot argue, except by contraries, from what he was to what

he will be. Of course you are come to spend the day with me, my boy?"

David peremptorily refused; and looking at his watch, bade Mr. Wertley a hasty good-morning. Deaf to all hospitable entreaties, as he crossed the hall behind Mr. Wertley, and threw one glance around him at the familiar scene, he wrung his hands, as if he strove to free himself of some invisible manacles; his manner was scattered and somewhat *brusque* as he parted with the old man on the steps, leaving the latter to imagine he was offended.

"I will put her from my mind for ever," growled David hoarsely, as he entered his own hall-door. But as he spoke, the tyrannic spell was on him that would not let him rest. In his simple metaphysics, he had always supposed that thought, like muscular action, was voluntary and under his control; but now he proved that he was its captive and slave.

"I will destroy all mementoes of her," he said, impatiently opening his desk. The poor fool, like other such fools, had of course his love-relics,

some little notes of hers, which she wrote to him as deputy for her father; and he seated himself at the table in the sitting-room, his heavy limbs straggled before him, and one of these precious billets grasped in his hand. He looked at it with an unconscious sigh before he destroyed it, when—right at his ear, he was echoed by a huge sigh, which might have escaped from the bosom of Behemoth. Looking slowly round, David confronted his father's rubicund face, peering at the letter over his shoulder.

“And was she cruel to my poor boy? the d—— little minx! And how do we feel now?” lisped old Chantrey, concluding with another profound sigh.

David put the letter quietly into his pocket, and rose good-humouredly.

“Now won't you? why won't you confide? we must make up a love-potion for you directly; a sixpenny black-draught, eh? My poor boy, where do you feel it, eh?—where do you feel it? Now *don't* reject a father's sympathy.”

David laughed with affected carelessness, and

wandered over to the window ; whilst his father, taking a lackadaisical attitude, indulged from time to time in hideous and dolorous moans, interspersing his lamentations with snatches of song :

“ Poor young Damon loved a maid,
Gentle Damon, silly Damon ;
Wait till you get a beard, she said ;
Silly-illy, silly-illy Damon.

How do you feel now, my boy ?”

These feeling inquiries came at the most unlikely and inappropriate moments. The old nurse-tender, for instance, entering the room to boil some mess for Lizzy on the fire, he immediately took her opinion upon the ravages of love in David's face and appearance, and asked her advice as a wise woman ; nay, further, he made the old lady look very foolish by affecting to be smitten by her pimply charms, and sent her running out of the room with the absurd eyes and monstrous grimaces he made at her. He kept up his persecution in a random way all the morning. For instance, he would take his stand opposite Davy, his white hair reared up into gigantic ass's

ears, and, with his twinkling black eyes fixed upon him, would heave those Behemoth sighs, varied with unutterable moanings and snatches of love-ditties; then sitting down to his paper, and apparently forgetful of mischief, he would suddenly break into gentle cooings, or blow a ravenous kiss at the ceiling, watching Davy from the corner of his eye.

Davy bore it all with the most profound apathy. Those fanatics despise ridicule; they sit in the clouds above it. The temper of Davy's love and Davy's loyalty was touched no more than Whitefield's devotion when he preached in the market-place.

"Governor," said Davy genially, "I like your fun very much; laugh me out of this fit if you can, for I can't get what I'm wishing for."

His father stood up, put his hands in his pockets, and looked at his son, for a moment or so, in merry scorn.

"You poor dawny, you'll want her a long time if you wait till she comes to you. It's a good business match, and I give my consent.

Then why the deuce don't you go like a man, as I did to your mother, and say, with a sort of a cooing confident laugh: 'Come along, let's be married'? and it's done. A woman despises a mooning lover like you,—a fellow that's always dawdling and maudling, sink-a-pace, sink-a-pace; afraid to put his arm round her waist and whisk her away."

"You've spared me a confession, governor; and if you'll be serious a moment, and care to hear me, I'll tell you why I sit here and do nothing: I have made it simply impossible by my own act that I should ever see her again."

Here he told his father all about it. How the gentleman who prosecuted him for assault was the lady's brother; and that any feeling which she entertained towards himself was one of abhorrence.

"Pshaw," cried his buoyant father, "she'll forgive it before the wales are gone from her brother's back. Juliet was never fairly in love till Romeo pinked her cousin Tybalt. It's just the difficulty a lover delights in, you fool! If you don't put a mountain in his way, love-making is

as cloying as eating jam-tarts. Why, there's Orpheus went to hell for his lady; eh, lad? didn't he?"

He hummed an old doggrel, and played an imaginary fiddle, softly swaying his figure to and fro :

“Young Orpheus handled his fiddle so well,
He fiddled Eurydice out of hell,
With his rinkum, tinkum too.
If she was good as she was fair,
How the devil did she get there?
With his rinkum, tinkum, rinkum, tinkum,
rinkum, tinkum too.”

“Neither you nor I, governor, have the music in us to fiddle back this lady,” laughed David rising, and taking his father's arm he led him into the parlour.

Dinner was served; and old Chantrey gravely sent the servant out to the garden for a head of lettuce and a sprig of sweet-marjoram, which he placed on David's plate, assuring him that it was the proper diet for a lover.

“Mr. Davy is hipped, Sally. That's the food of love. I won't insult you, my dear boy, by

offering you such vulgar fare as corned-beef and cabbage."

But Davy, laughing, helped himself largely in his turn, and ate a hearty dinner.

"Ben," said the old torturer, in a mock-confidential tone over his toddy, "were you ever in love with a young woman, without the heart to tell it?"

Ben was, as we have said, more vigilant than usual; his eyes, full of watery fire, were continually turned upon Davy.

"In love!—law, sir, bless you! in course I was," he replied with a clattering little laugh; "I kept company in my day with a young female up the hill and down the hill, in fair weather and in foul weather, in pocket and out of pocket, for two years."

"That's what I call constancy. Describe the sensations, Ben, for your young master. How did you feel under your waistcoat-pocket?"

"My veskit-pocket, sir! I don't know. I don't keep my money there—never did. The sensations was wery delightful while they lasted, Mr.

Davy, as the simpleton said to the sharper who flattered him out of his money. I was a clerk in Mincing Lane, Mr. Davy; and I kept company with a young woman called—eh, was it Annie? No, no, no,” he cackled; “’twas ’Melia. If she was alive now, Mr. Davy, I wouldn’t know her; wery odd that, for we used to keep company every afternoon, a-walking in St. James’s Park, and a-teasing out at Hampstead on Sundays. Yet, Lord bless you, sir, ’Melia wouldn’t know me, or I know ’Melia now.”

“The two of you might be caged as little Madagascar monkeys,” laughed old Chantrey, “and sit munching and chattering on your hams all day.”

“Well, Ben, old fellow?” said Davy kindly, laying a hand on the old man’s arm.

“I’ve often thought I’d like to go a-walking among them green hills again; I feel so young, Mr. Davy. I fancy I could come on ’Melia suddenly in her neat short-waisted nankeen-gown, as showed her feet and ankles, and her beautiful big bonnet, and me in my hessians and green swallow-

tails, Mr. Davy. I feel sure I'd come upon her as I topped one of them 'illa."

Old Chantrey applauded gently on the table.

"And why didn't you marry her, Ben, and have somebody to rub down your old back for the rheumatism and coddle your old heart?"

"Bless you, sir, we quarrelled. 'Melia hadn't got no fault but one: she was a leetle greedy in the matter of shrimps and winkles and kidney-pies, and the like luxuries. Law, sir, she could eat a pint of shrimps to her own plate, Mr. Davy, and that every evening, as if she hadn't eat no dinner!" Here he paused for a thin clattering laugh as he bent forward and hid his face. "Now I'd have stood tea and bread-and-butter unlimited, but my salary was small, Mr. Davy; and it was 'Shrimps, shrimps, shrimps, dear Benny, or a kidney-pie, darling,' till it began to tell on me, and I lost my temper one evening—though, bless her dear heart! she was welcome to any thing that was mine in them days. 'No, 'Melia,' said I; 'it's no use carrying-on, for you are breaking me.' She thought I meant breaking my heart,

poor dear," chuckled old Ben; "but in the moment of—of—"

"Frenzy," suggested old Chantrey.

"I told her that her shrimps and her winkles and her kidney-pies, 'Ben darling,' stood me fourteen pound one-and-fivepence in the time we'd been keeping company. Egad, Mr. Davy, it wounded her to the heart. 'The idear!' she cried; 'to tell me of dirty money!' she blubbed; 'good-bye for ever!' and at the word, Mr. Davy, she runned out of the tea-garden and never spoke to me no more, though I bought her a beautiful spencer as cost a lot, and I'd have laid my salary at her feet the next moment. I think she died of that insult; leastways it was consumption."

"Or indigestion," cried old Chantrey; "she died of the shrimps, Benny, and we'll put it on her tombstone. Where was she buried?"

"Bless your heart, sir, I visited her grave ten years ago, and there was an inch thick of moss on the stone. Them courtings and them kidney-pies I may call the ancestors of the courtings and the pies goin' on about us now."

"And where's the big bonnet now, Ben, eh?" said the old man rising. "I saw the ghost of an old female in a big bonnet and short nankeen skirt going into your room last night."

"My 'Melia," said old Ben, shaking his head thoughtfully, "was just two-and-twenty when she died; she was very fond of me, Mr. Davy, and my pocket couldn't have been much worse if we'd been and married. 'Money!' she cries; 'the idear!'"

Presently he touched Davy on the arm and asked a few words with him, and the audience was immediately granted. Of course it came to nothing, and the old fellow's petition was mere garrulous iteration about his returned youth and unimpaired capacity for business.

"I want to put away a little money, Mr. Davy, afore I get bed-ridden and helpless."

"All right, Ben; we mean work; you and I pull in the same boat, Ben."

CHAPTER VII.

MONTAGUE AND CAPULET.

SINCE his retirement old Chantrey had a natural distaste for visitors. At first his seclusion arose from a sense of disgrace and wounded pride, and then it became a habit; nothing grows on one so much as solitariness.

The next day, David having gone forth to look after Sir Hugh and his promises, there came a rambling double-knock to the door, and the servant announced to old Chantrey a visitor for his son.

“Why didn’t you tell him Master David is from home?” he said gruffly, not lifting his eyes from his paper.

The servant went out and gave the message, and old Chantrey caught the mild notes of a voice he knew.

"A few grapes," said the voice, "for the poor little girl. I have not a card about me; but remember my name—Mr. Wertley, Mr. Wertley."

The hall-door closed, and as it closed, up jumped old Chantrey from his paper and slid over to the window noiselessly, and then he saw the blameless back and gentle gait of old Wertley, as he approached the gate. Mr. Chantrey had a grudge against him which few men could forgive and none can forget; yet even he must have admitted, if you put him on oath, that poor old Wertley was blameless in the matter. Mr. Chantrey had been humbled in his own eyes before him,—had yielded to the temptation of opportunity, and stooped to ask a favour, namely, Mr. Wertley's name on an accommodation-bill; and he had been refused. Now, as his eyes followed the mild oval form in its retreat, he felt the leaven of pride and wrath rising. Stepping, on the impulse, into the hall, he opened the door and called after the visitor.

Old Wertley turned and came back, waving his hand courteously.

"I did not know you received visitors, sir," he said. "I came to inquire about your little daughter, and to see your son.

"Come in, sir ; come in—come in."

"Thank you ; I'm rather in a hurry," said old Wertley, decidedly hesitating on the threshold, with a recollection of his late visit distinctly before his mind.

"You walked very leisurely, sir, for a man in a hurry. Come in, I receive my son's visitors when he is not at home."

Old Wertley stepped in with the same misgiving that the simple bluebottle felt when he accepted the invitation of the old spider. Mr. Chantrey motioned him with a sarcastic courtesy to the arm-chair, and stood opposite him, making scrutiny of his guest's uneasy face.

"We are likely to have a mild winter," said old Wertley ; "very seasonable weather for the hay-making, very."

"Do we owe you any money, sir ?" asked old Chantrey with a side-long scrutiny.

"Mum—money, sir ! Certainly not," stuttered

old Wertley, who thus received his first electric shock.

"Pray don't be disturbed at my question, Mr. Wertley. I wish we did. It wasn't my fault that we don't; but as a visitor here is so rare, except with the object I have suggested—"

"Well, Mr. Chantrey," smiled old Wertley, "I think I see what you would say; but remember this is the second time I've had the pleasure of seeing you in your own house, and I have never seen you in mine. I shall be—"

"Make no excuses, Mr. Wertley. Heavy-backed Christians like you and me are bad neighbours." Chantrey laid his large spread hand below his waistcoat. "There's a companion, sir, which makes a man very domestic—a paunch, sir!"

"Thank heaven," said old Wertley, a little nauseated by this plain speaking, "I am very active—an excellent walker—ah, very active habits, sir—ah. Do you expect your son home to-day?"

"Every moment, Mr. Wertley. He has had

a quarrel with your family, the young ruffian! Hem!—you have not got a horsewhip under your coat?”

Old Wertley laughed.

“No, no, no, sir. There’s a sort of family feud among the young people; but you and I stand clear of that. Old Capulet is content with his crutch,” he said, knocking his walking-stick against the boards. “He don’t call out for his long sword. The fact is, I am quite alone, Mr. Chantrey. Ladies gone; and I should be very much favoured indeed, if you and your son would come over and dine with me to-morrow—a quiet bachelor’s dinner.”

“Thank you, sir; thank you, thank you. When I was a rich man and a county magistrate, I used to take the opportunity of my wife’s absence to ask up the family druggist to dinner. Ha, ha! A bachelor’s dinner need not be select, eh, sir?”

“You do me injustice, sir,” said Mr. Wertley, sitting erect in his chair. “Your son was welcome to a place at my table, as an honoured guest,

whenever he chose to come; but I had not the pleasure of your acquaintance."

"Don't mention it—don't mention it," said old Chantrey with a listless wave of his open palm.

"If any one should have cause of offence," said the conciliatory old gentleman, "it should be I. We were a later arrival in the neighbourhood than your family; yet we were never honoured by a call. Ha, ha, ha! You see I have a point against you there. By the way, I was charmed to hear that your son is coming in for a good appointment. That will put him beyond—"

"Patronage," said Chantrey, completing the sentence.

"Well, I don't know," said old Wertley cheerfully. "Civilised men must always be dependent—from the ploughboy up to the Queen; and she is dependent upon her ministers and upon God. As a magistrate, sir, you held your commission under the patronage of—"

"Have you settled the sewage question to

your satisfaction? and what about the Whigs and Tories? I say, knock their heads together, and let 'em exchange names. You're up to argument, I see, Mr. Wertley," said old Chantrey, staring at him with his mischievous smile.

"I never argue, sir," said that inveterate wrangler, looking at his watch uneasily. He was not in the habit of having all his branches thus rudely shaken from moment to moment. He passed his hand nervously over his forehead and rose to go.

"Yes, sir," said old Chantrey, not pretending to notice these intimations of an attempted escape. "My son will hold a substantial and recognised position. He needs a little ready-money — a hundred pounds or so — as a launch, and we must see to raise it. Now," continued he, transfixing old Wertley with his mischievous black eyes, and taking a fragment of an old letter from his pocket, "here is a stamped piece of paper, sir."

"I—I—really—must say good-morning, sir. We—we—discussed—I—tried to explain to you the other day—"

The poor old man was certain Mr. Chantrey held a blank bill of acceptance in his hand, and he made towards the door in much distress.

"Good-morning, sir," he said with all the civility he could muster. "I am very sorry to have missed seeing your son. I hope to hear improved accounts of your little daughter. Good-morning."

"Stay a moment, Mr. Wertley," said his tormentor. "You have called upon my son—not upon me. Pardon me, won't you leave a card?"

Poor old Wertley fumbled in his waistcoat-pocket.

"I have not got a card, sir, I am sorry to say."

"Here is a sheet of note-paper and a pen and ink."

"Just as good," said Wertley, smilingly returning; and laying aside his gloves and hat, he wrote his name on the paper. Mr. Chantrey took it up and looked at it, his head balanced, spectacles aside.

"Now, sir, for how much may I fill up this paper—five hundred? This is as good as a leaf from your bank-book."

Mr. Wertley forced a ghastly laugh.

"You are joking, sir; ah, how very good, Mr. Chantrey!"

"I never joke," said Old Chantrey sententially; "but I tell a good story sometimes. I'll tell you one before you go.

"I had an idle friend once in my prosperous days, who had a silly habit of flourishing his autograph in every direction; he'd cover a sheet of the *Times* with J. D. Dobbs. He visited the Pyramids, and I've no doubt he bescribbled the whole face of the stones as thick as hieroglyphics with J. D. Dobbs. Once on a fishing-excursion, sir, he was my companion, and he wrote six autographs in white chalk on my back, whilst I was unconsciously eating a sandwich. How do you think I cured him? Why, sir, I threw a quire of note-paper in his way one morning, and presently secured half-a-dozen very fine specimens of his autograph; I filled them up for five hundred

a-piece, and by George, sir, I stamped them." He inspected the paper in his hand. "Now this is your habitual handwriting, I suppose?"

Old Wertley knew Mr. Chantrey's dishonourable antecedents, and he was in a confused and unreasoning state of mind. There stood his foe with his ill-natured smile, and the paper greedily held (so it seemed to the old gentleman) in his two large yellow talons. He quite lost presence of mind.

"You—you—don't mean to say, sir,—"

"No, sir!" shouted old Chantrey, in a tone like a church-bell, and with a sudden passionate glare; "you ask my son to your house, and you ignore me; you call here on my son, and never pay me the courtesy of an inquiry; and now you insult me by an insinuation that I am a thief!"

"I can assure you, Mr. Chantrey," said he in great agitation, "I had no such meaning; pray accept my apologies if I have offended you. I am not very well, sir; pray pardon me."

He went to the door, which was opened for him by some one entering.

It was David. He looked from his father to his old friend in alarmed perplexity. Just as the pungent smell of brimstone remains in the air after an explosion of gunpowder, so were the tokens of this distressing scene palpable to an intruder in the faces of the two old men. Old Chantrey was glaring, and old Wertley was quailing, and David stood in troubled solicitude at the door.

“Lend me your arm,” said Mr. Wertley to him; “I’m not quite well.”

David led him out to the hall.

Now then the rupture between the two families is indeed complete. From henceforth all hope of future reconciliation is extinguished. Mr. Wertley’s uninterrupted kindness, his quiet friendly visit, and his desire for David’s society, were not unfavourable symptoms, and might have worked round in time to some happy issue; but now every tie was severed. Old Wertley’s dignity was outraged; and he had been as grievously insulted by the father as his step-son was insulted by the son. Fate had set against David.

He led his old friend to an arm-chair in the hall, placed him sitting upon it, and was about to relieve him of his hat and gloves, and blunder out some apology, when hat and gloves dropped from the old gentleman's hands and his head drooped forward. David looked in his face, and to his great alarm beheld two streams of blood issuing from his nostrils.

The first idea that occurred to him increased this shock ; he imagined that his father had struck their innocent guest.

“ You have not received a blow ? ” he whispered, for the suspicion was intolerable.

Poor old Wertley shook his head, and pressed David's arm.

“ Get me home, Chantrey, if you can. No, no ; he did not strike me ; I am liable to illness.”

David supported him for some moments on the chair, and still as the blood flowed, his old friend seemed naturally to grow fainter.

He took a moment's counsel with himself in this perplexing situation, threw an anxious look toward the room they had just quitted, and then

catching up the old gentleman's drooping form in his arms, he carried him upstairs to his own room, and laid him on his own bed. With such simple knowledge as he possessed, he stuped the patient's face with cold water, and offered him that most masculine panacea, a glass of brandy from his private flask, which poor old Wertley did not refuse; but the bleeding was not stanchd.

Then David, much alarmed, summoned the nurse-tender in haste, and bade her continue the stuping, whilst he ran off breathlessly to the dispensary in Hampstead. Not twenty minutes had elapsed when he came dashing up the avenue in a cab with a doctor at his side, whom he led upstairs to the bed-side of the patient. On the way he had been able to give the doctor some history of the old gentleman's constitutional affection; and it required no great skill to arrive at the source of this sudden attack and its treatment. The bleeding they found to be stopped, and danger for the present seemed over. David was complimented upon his judgment in administering a dose of brandy, which was, in fact, suggested to

him by mere rude instinct. But there was one injunction which the medical man laid down with emphasis—the patient must be spared the smallest excitement or disturbance.

To David's question, whether it would be possible to have Mr. Wertley quietly removed to his own house, not two miles distant, the doctor replied briefly :

“ It might be fatal ; by quiet and great care, there is hope. If he has any near relations I should communicate with them at once.”

This latter advice was spoken impressively to David in the hall, as the doctor shook hands with him ere departing.

As David stood alone, a second time he took counsel with himself. The cab had not yet left the door, and the doctor was returning to Hampstead on foot, when David came to his resolution.

“ There is but one course here,” he thought ; “ it is false delicacy to hesitate. I wish it, but it is also right.”

He went out, and entering the cab drove to London post-haste, stopped at the first telegraph-

office, and telegraphed the news to Miss Wertley. Having done it, he emerged bewildered into the sunlight. The man was so lucky as to have done a virtuous act, and at the same time worked his will.

When Beldame Duty and Siren Desire point the same way, what a noble little animal is man ! he ties the token of the former in his helmet, and charges home with a flourish of trumpets, amplifying on his conduct with an unctuous zeal ; nothing can withstand him, when he holds such high warrant to delight.

The next consideration which assailed him in his bewildered counsel with himself was, how to lodge her ; how to feast her ; how to welcome her ; since it was fated she should be his guest. He stood still like a wax-figure opposite a fragrant sausage-shop, debating with himself in a sort of suppressed rapture, which passers-by mistook for gross appetite.

There was a good room adjoining that in which old Wertley lay, and this he dedicated as her abode ; but he was profoundly perplexed as to

how a young lady's room ought to be furnished. Upon this question there was need of immediate decision. Glaring at the frying sausages, at the potman's shining face, and the gilded letters on the wall, he strove to recall to his mind the arrangement of his mother's bedroom when she lived. Some of the furniture, he knew, was still extant; but many indispensables were long ago broken up or sold. He thrust his hand into his pocket and felt his purse. With the assurance communicated by that grasp, he set off to a neighbouring perennial auction; and there he had knocked down to him a pretty oval glass with a gilt frame, a plated candlestick, and a fancy glass ewer and basin, a pair of lustre ornaments for the chimney-piece, and such useless trifles, chosen with all the jealous selection of a child furnishing its baby-house.

With this upholstery he returned home in a cab, and transported it to the room which was to be so highly honoured. In the lumber-room he foraged among the wreck of furniture which once belonged to their large town-house; and a marble

dressing-table turned up, and was immediately washed and repaired ; an old drawing-room carpet came to light, from which he cut the freshest piece, all roses and rhubarb-leaves and brown arabesques : this he noiselessly laid down without tacks, so as not to disturb the patient within. With the aid of a neighbouring carpenter he contrived to erect a sort of French bed with snowy curtains and coverlid, artistically applied by the laundress. The arrangement of the table, the glass, the lustres, and other superfluities came about like fairywork, till he could not recognise the room ; till a sort of awe began to seize him, as if the room were consecrated already to the coming tenant. It was a shrine for his patron saint ; it was a woman's room, and he retired from it. In fact, once he had called it in his mind Miss Wertley's room, our young Quixote would not have put his foot within it again for a ten-pound note.

He calculated the hour of her arrival on the ensuing day, and still with chivalric delicacy he arranged that her own maid should meet her at

the station, and accompany her to the house. He laid down a strict code of conduct for himself, actuated by a perverse yet noble pride, by scruples which steady, sensible, worldly folk can scarcely appreciate.

“One thing I am resolved on,” thought he, “of one thing let her be sure, I shall take no advantage of her situation by word or act to forward my own wishes. I will wait upon her with zeal out of sight; but I will never tax her gratitude, or by a moment’s unnecessary intrusion add to her humiliation. That is fixed and sure.”

That evening Mr. Wertley gave him some trouble by his contempt for the doctor’s directions, evidenced in his expressed determination to get home somehow.

“My dear friend,” he said feebly, “if I were to be trundled in a wheelbarrow, I would go. I cannot remain in your father’s house.”

Here David urged that it was his house, that he paid the rent, that his name was in the lease, and that he had a long debt of hospitality to repay. He then told him that his daughter would

probably arrive in the morning, having been telegraphed for by the doctor's advice. This intelligence seemed to place his illness before Mr. Wertley's mind in an alarming point of view. It implied that he was in danger, and the extreme faintness he experienced from the endeavour to rise completed the impression. He suffered David, therefore, and the nurse-tender to undress him gently, and put him comfortably beneath the clothes.

David sat by him for an hour or so, and reassured him, as far as was prudent, by foretelling a speedy recovery with common care and quiet; for the old gentleman had begun to whine and fuss a little, and to talk tremulously of his worldly affairs.

Eventually he grew calm, and settled into a sound sleep, which was unbroken till the morning, when old Chantrey was civil enough to knock at his door and make a good-natured inquiry from without, how he felt himself. Then came David, carrying a breakfast-tray himself, drowsy-eyed and languid after his night's watch. He had

made the toast himself, and, not forgetful of the doctor's compliment, had brought a small glass of brandy to flavour the tea withal. He sat by the patient's side and read the newspaper to him in a low voice, following it up with words of cheer and solicitous hospitality, till the sound of wheels upon the gravel startled him; and he hastened from the room and nervously down the hall, in supreme doubt whether he should show himself so as to give her the welcome that was in his heart to give, or whether it would be kinder to her to keep out of her sight, and let the maid show her up.

When once, however, he saw through the window-slit of the hall a cab standing at the door with a valise on top—when once he beheld a lady's figure get hastily out, he manned himself, and all that boyish fluttering of anticipation departed. He felt what he ought to be to her, and his course of conduct seemed on that instant to stand clear before him.

CHAPTER VIII.

MERLIN'S WAND.

HE opened the hall-door for her, and she stood before him very pale after the long and anxious journey. There was a sort of piteous wildness about her, as if she feared ill news. He offered her a kind yet tempered welcome in a few words. He relieved her mind about her father as far as he was warranted; and assured her that, for the few days during which her stay might be compulsory, the part of the house in which her father was should be exclusively at her service. He spoke like a courteous stranger; and turning to the maid who had just laid the valise in the hall, bade her to show her mistress upstairs.

How did Emma demean herself in her peculiar and embarrassing situation, compelled as she was to take shelter and sojourn beneath the roof

of an enemy? The first words she uttered were certainly neither graceful nor grateful.

"Thank you, Mr. Chantrey," she said in a quick low tone, not looking in his face. "I am very much obliged for your promptitude in letting me know. I am going to remove papa home at once."

David was in the act of retiring, when he turned and said with unwavering courtesy :

"I am sorry to say, for his sake and yours, Miss Wertley, that the doctor has forbidden it. I asked him whether it would be possible, feeling how painful it would be to both you and him to remain in my house; he said that at present it would be fatal."

He saw her lip tremble. She seemed quite taken aback and alarmed by the intelligence. Then she said in the same rapid voice, without lifting her eyes :

"I should hope it may be safe to-day," and passed on hastily upstairs.

What else could she have done, or how else deported herself? we may here inquire of a

cavilling reader. Should she, indeed, have sailed in smilingly with outstretched hand and words of reconciliation, because she and her father were obliged to submit to humiliation, and they had been compelled to sojourn with an enemy?

There was a measure of positive grievance in the case. It contained one of those grievances which stings one all the more in that we cannot fasten it upon somebody. The simplest vent by far under our exasperation is to visit it on one whom we generally dislike, and who would certainly like to have done it, if he didn't. This looks like retribution, and affords solace.

David at least was tranquil and satisfied; he did not expect more from her. He only thought this: not since the days of Merlin had there ever been such an enchantment worked, or such a blessed apparition conjured at the devil's beck, to delight and turn the heart of man, as Emmie's appearance under his roof. He wandered out to realise it; and crossing two fields, one of them menacing him with action for trespass, he climbed a fence and sat among the brown dock-seed, grass,

and wild-turnip. Here he was in a position to command a full view of his unhomelike house; and lighting his pipe he gazed at it: he engineered it with his eyes through the lone and contemplative puffs. She is within it; must sleep beneath his roof; must eat of his bread and salt. She is tied to the place by her dearest affections; all the little daily interest and cares of nurse-tending must be borne in the very atmosphere in which he lives. Her shadow shall every day be pictured on his walls; her hand fall on his banisters; her step press upon his stairs. Now he may look without a pang at her late home, whose distant roof and gables used to sicken him with baffled love.

The lodestone was gone from thence, and set within his own home. He surveyed it from basement to chimney curiously, as some antiquarian might contemplate a house just picked out fresh from Herculaneum. It had absolutely become a stranger to his gaze: whilst to us it still remains a heaven-abandoned old mansion, dear at ten pounds a-year, with a tenant more

or less in it than it had before, to his eyes there was a witchery fallen over it softly and dreamily. The russet meadow and the poplars caught the strange gleam of airy happiness. The thrushes sung silly carnival upon it, and were unanimous in the welcome to the goddess. The donkey that rolled in the lane was presently under the spell, and brayed an inspired welcome. But most supremely of all was the Donkey who sat on the fence caught by it; that great hairy visionary with his half-closed eyes and fierce-glowing pipe. Pray what was it all about? A young lady in a stuff-gown, who could play you a tune on the piano and arrange a nosegay tastefully; not much more. Well, she was pretty.

Skin-deep beauty, shallow evanescent beauty, how it can drug and fire a sensible and a strong man! Now there is aged Mrs. —, who was immortalised by Morris in song for her resistless beauty. I met her the other day, and found her quite brisk and intellectual yet; her mind is mel-
lowed and full-fruited. She can summon up still, no doubt, all those pretty ways and whims and

caprices which were said to have possessed such deadly charms for the bygone youth, and set them by the ears. No: I exposed myself as an experiment to all the battery of them; I was able to withstand her little tossings of the gray curls, and naïve replies, and her dainty little paces; her clever mimicry and quaint anecdotes: there was positively no infection. I could not have knelt to her, and should have shrunk from a kiss. I left her sadly, wondering. It is not, then, the mind or the pretty ways of woman; it is merely skin that enthalls us. The Hottentot likes it oily, and set on a snub block; the Red Indian likes it gaily streaked on a flat skull; the intellectual European goes rapt and mad about a transparent cuticle—over such and such a transient form.

Davy returned home to his dinner, and found his father rather cross about the invasion—calling the house an hospital; complaining of meeting bowls of gruel and poultices coming up and going down on every landing—egad! almost clapt in his face; and that girl established there in the house; so that men cannot enjoy their bachelor

freedom, but were condemned to starch and propriety. This was the pith of his grumblings; and did he say "that girl"? How can you then believe in Emmie's divinity? Her charms and power must reside in simple Davy's eyes, for it is evident she has no more might over the old man's spirit than a common plaster-cast.

Poor old man, all his thoughts and hopes were centred upon those fading prospects which Sir Hugh was so cruel as to dangle; whilst Davy preserved a grand serenity on the subject, which you may call by any other name than philosophy.

With old Chantrey it had become a matter of vital moment whether the butcher's bill, the grocer's account, so recklessly swollen, should ever be liquidated. With Davy it had become a question of thrilling interest whether he should enjoy a chance-meeting with Emmie upon the stairs, and catch a smile from her as he beat a chivalric retreat.

With old Chantrey it was a matter of grave misgiving that Davy should have broken his connection with the paper before he had secured the

1

appointment which was promised by the too amiable Sir Hugh. With Davy it was a cause for brooding doubt, whether his reserve and restrained address towards Emmie, when he met her at the door, might not be misconstrued into indifference or cold welcome, instead of its true motive—generous forbearance.

Old Chantrey revolved the probabilities of added expense from their uninvited guests, of possible responsibilities and certain trouble. David thought heaven was in the house, and eagerly thirsted for an opportunity of self-sacrifice, for a chance to spend or be spent for her; he would have been charmed at risk—as the olden knights prowled about for giants—proud to take harm in her cause.

Davy was by worlds the happier man of the two. The happiness of this life consists in its delusions; let us cultivate them, my sisters and brothers.

He learned with gratification that Emmie had not hesitated to partake of his hospitality. Finding, it may be supposed, that her sojourn in the

house was inevitable, and learning the facts of his attention and kindness to her father, she adapted herself to her difficult position, and paid him this compliment. He also learned, with feelings which he would have been ashamed to avow to himself, that the doctor who called next morning had been very explicit to her, and that she was now satisfied of the necessity of her stay.

His life for the next few days was one round of excitement. The calculations of what hour he was likely to hear her step on the stairs; the wafts of her voice which he caught, or might catch at any given moment; the tidings which reached him about her looks and state of mind, her wishes or wants; and the delight of meeting the latter with hidden hand, or seemingly anticipating them,—all these little incidents absorbed his attention, and he did nothing but grasp at these straws.

It must be understood that after the first day on which Emmie consented to partake of the meals Chantrey had provided, she and her father had, as a matter of course, their own provisions, and the maid was sent every day to cater for them.

Emmie was very sensitive about giving the servant of the house the slightest added trouble, and consequently she and her maid contrived to do any little cooking they required. This necessity brought Emmie up and down stairs at certain periods in the day, and Chantrey knew the hours.

He met her only twice, so careful was he to frustrate the yearnings of his heart, and to thwart his passion : the first time she passed him quickly with a little grave bow ; the second she called after him as he was retiring, and apologised for the great trouble she and her father were giving, and thanking him for his kind sufferance.

He then turned, and with liberal wave of his hand and generous smile assured her the house was heartily at her service ; that their presence in the house made no change ; he only wished her father and she had the comfort they were accustomed to ; and after he had made this little speech, he beat his retreat.

He was punctilious, as we say, to sacrifice those very opportunities which he coveted. But

he was not without hope—a perfect sheet of green spring-buds had bloomed up suddenly out of the old trunk ; he felt that there were a hundred little silent appeals going up to her daily from his kind and delicate acts, his silent anticipations of all her wants. The visitations of her maid to the hall were not without a reflected interest for him ; and it must be confessed that the shillings he gave her, and the compliments he paid to her cap and comely face, were not for her sake. The girl thoroughly appreciated his reasons ; but she made a slight mistake in our friend Davy's nature.

It happened that she was passing downstairs with a tray, her little French cap perched upon the back of her head, from which floated two broad cherry-coloured ribbons, presented to her by the gallant Davy ; he chanced to be passing through the hall, when she called to him in a whisper, and beckoned : “ I've got something to tell you, sir, that you'll like to hear.”

David took out a shilling, and followed her to the kitchen-stairs with a smile.

“ I've just been upstairs, sir, and I heard Miss

Wertley talking of you. I thought you would like to hear what she said."

"Keep it," said David: "what Miss Wertley says upstairs shall be as private as if she was speaking in her own home."

He took out another shilling and doubled the fee, so as to atone for the reproof. The girl went downstairs rather red, and with a great floating of ribbons. Surely it is sorry wisdom in love to make an enemy of my lady's-maid.

His besetting anxiety seemed to be lest Emmie should be conscious of any obligation, or lest she should be painfully reminded that she was in a strange house. With a punctilious delicacy he removed the hats, coats, and sticks from the hall; and his father's room being on the lower story, he placed a screen at the bottom of the stairs, which stretched across to the head of the kitchen-flight, that she might pass and re-pass for the most part unnoticed. Though his mind was set on many little thoughtful acts like the foregoing, he kept strictly behind the scenes.

One day, the third after Emmie's arrival, he

received a pencilled note from old Wertley, entreating a visit, complaining of low spirits and the enervating effects of continual nurse-tending. "Do not feel any awkwardness," it concluded; "you will find it all right."

He could not well refuse this appeal, and the last words decided him. But the man had worked himself up, for the last three days, into such agonies of punctilio, that this stride to happiness seemed perilously abrupt. Whilst he was making his gentlemanly approaches from the distance, and sinking his anxious parallels, he was suddenly called upon to charge. There was doubtless some surfing at his heart as he ran lightly upstairs and knocked.

"Come in. Is that Chantrey?" said a feeble voice; upon which Chantrey entered. It seemed a year since he had entered his room last. It was strangely unfamiliar to his eyes. Emmie was standing over at the fire, with her back to him, as he entered; but she immediately turned round and bowed gravely, lifting her eyes to his face for a moment.

Old Wertley sat up in bed, looking very querulous and bloodless, with a white bristle of three days' growth on his beard and chin. His first address to his friend was in a very pathetic key; but when he had secured Chantrey in the arm-chair at his bed-side, and had thrown himself upon his sympathy, he seemed to brighten up. David, anxious to please, and feeling himself under Emmie's observation, took out the morning's paper and read to him the leaders, to which Mr. Wertley attentively listened with many dissentient shakings of the head, airy protests against the opinions contained in them, indicative of all he might urge in their disproof, had he but the energy and breath. Altogether, looking at his rumpled white head, his fixed eyes, his colourless face, and grizzled lip and chin, he looked like a feeble edition of the murdered Banquo.

David had been reading with zeal, when, on looking up suddenly at one of the old gentleman's dissentient grunts, he perceived that Emmie had left the room and closed the door behind her. After this discovery, he fell into abstraction as

he read, musing upon the question, whether she had left the room in offence.

"My dear Chantrey," interrupted poor Mr. Wertley, in a half-playful whine, "you are reading to me about the good harvest. I can think of nothing but this hideous crop upon my chin. I literally sleep on thorns. Emmie would only have nerve to use the back of the razor; and that evil-looking ogress the nurse would sever my windpipe. Will you come to my relief?"

In a few moments David had him by the nose, and, with his ponderous knee upon the bed, lathered his chin and lip, and commenced operations, while poor old Wertley's face assumed the expression of bland cramp. The operator was just finishing off the chin with a masterly stroke or two, when he heard a suppressed laugh behind him, and, turning, perceived that Emmie had been a silent spectator.

She recovered herself in a moment, and thanked him for his trouble briefly enough. She had evidently been surprised into laughter, and felt it somewhat outside her *rôle*. She then got

her work and sat down by the fire to recover her dignity, turned half away from him as before ; and David, having assisted Mr. Wertley to sponge and wipe dry, was about to retire, but the old gentleman motioned him back, and pointed to the chair by the bedside.

"Emmie," said he, "your back-hair is very charming ; but we might be more gratified if you would let us see your face."

Emmie turned her chair quietly round.

"I think you might offer Mr. Chantrey a glass of wine, love, after his most artistic performance upon my face. All barbers I ever met with are butchers compared to him."

Emmie rose promptly, and opening the cupboard,—Davy's own old cupboard, on the upper shelf of which were a miscellany of burst boxing-gloves and mouldy fishing-tackle,—she brought forth the wine-decanter, a glass, and some cake. With a shy apology or two for occupying his shelf and his rooms, she offered him a glass of wine with an estranged politeness. He accepted the refreshment with hearty assurance of welcome ;

and he hob-nobbed wine-glasses with old Wertley with a happy good-fellowship.

Inspired, we suppose, by the stimulant, and the increased comfort to his person of a clean shave and a cool wash, Mr. Wertley took the sudden and irrational whim to dress and get up for a while; having been specially forbidden to stir from his bed by the doctor.

Emmie stood at the other side of the bed protesting in vain; but her papa called peremptorily for his trousers, and there was quite a distressing scene. She forbore asking Chantrey's interference as long as she could. At length she gave him an appealing look, and he rose. He laid friendly hands on Mr. Wertley's shoulders, and dispensing with all argument, he laid him back against the pillow with pleasant cajolery. The old gentleman's perversity subsided under his genial affectionate restraint.

Emmie returned to her work, after having glanced a look of thanks at her coadjutor; and he, simple man, instead of retiring gracefully, rewarded by that look, was intoxicated by the

hour, and for the first time pressed his advantage. He sat down again by the bed, and seeming to converse with her father, he secretly enjoyed the luxury of her presence. So there these two beings sat, whom circumstances had conspired to part for ever, brought together by Fate, which took the feeble semblance of old Wertley.

Truly, Fate, whom poets and sculptors represent as a gigantic being, mantled and stern, takes many a freakish form, and shows herself in many a paltry act.

Old Wertley's gentle nature had rather curdled in illness. He had grown fretful, and, we are sorry to say, sometimes exercised over his daughter the despotism of a great child. He perceived her reserve towards his friend Chantrey; and, visited perhaps by a querulous spirit of mischief, such as often possesses this class of invalid, he sought to provoke an intercourse between them; for instance, he bade her bring Chantrey an old volume of Spenser, and show him where she last stopped reading out. She rose, took up the book without a comment, and going round to him,

pointed out the place; nor did she show any ungraceful reluctance or affectation; she was only silent.

The feeble voice of the sick has a potency not always given to stentorian lungs; and they know it. They want occupation for the mind; and the only possible one is, harrying a nurse, which employment, if she be not stupidly good-humoured and phlegmatic, is not unexciting.

Mr. Wertley sick had become a complete parody on Mr. Wertley well. The dear old pantaloons in his nightcap had become very fretful and hard to manage; in fact, his spirit of amiable perversity had grown quite ascendant, and had acquired a spice of lazy mischief not altogether amiable.

There was, however, a very great excuse for the old gentleman's degeneracy. Alas! he had been disappointed, retarded, counteracted in the ambition of his soul. That same Fate which favoured Chantrey had knocked over his pretty card-castle for a freak, and never said "by your leave." His paternal mind had evidently been

fired by the contemplation of Castle Craigh and a future peerage entering his family; and now, in the prosperous crisis, the favouring wind, Emmie was withdrawn from her career, and he—*he* imprisoned and helpless just as he was opening his wings for a flight to the castle of his son-in-law apparent. He was not the first in these pages who performed that flight to Castle Craigh on broomstick fancy.

Of course he had no other rational resource under the circumstances than to amuse himself by harrying his nurse. Not having the faintest impression that David had any warmer feelings towards her than mere friendship, but having a lively consciousness that she had against him a very rooted displeasure, the materials were at hand for a very agreeable persecution.

“Emmie was talking of you, Chantrey, the other day very civilly; you must not take affront because she will sit with her back turned towards us, showing all her hooks-and-eyes.”

Emma took the hint, and brought her chair to the far side of the fire, where she faced her

company; but she was silent, and kept her eyes upon her work.

"Emmie love," murmured her father, "I want that table brought over, and placed beside the bed. I will not ask your leave, Chantrey. Stay now; gently, gently."

These last words were addressed to his daughter; who, laying down her work patiently, went over to the table, and placed her hands under its rim to draw it over.

"The child supposes she can do every thing by herself. Woman is a dependent creature; my dear Chantrey, would you be so good as to assist her?"

"I can manage it alone," said David, going over promptly, and compassing the whole table with his outspread arms.

"No, no, no, no!—stop!" whined peaky old Wertley; "such a prodigious strain as you contemplate would sympathetically put my shoulder-blades out. Emmie, take one side; now, Chantrey: there, float it over—gently, closer. Ha!—Now, Emmie, put the backgammon-box on the table."

Emmie brought the backgammon-box round

to the far side of the bed, and laying it on the quilt, hastily began to arrange the men. She supposed that he wanted to play with her.

"Dear, oh dear! the child cannot see the commonest sequence of ideas! What on earth have I had that great table brought over for? When they built the great wall of China, was it to drive round it or upon it? Do you fancy our efforts to lay that great mass of mahogany must go for nothing?"

"What do you wish, papa?" said Emma rather plaintively.

"Chantrey, my dear friend, I am not strong enough to play. I want to watch a few games quietly, and play umpire; let me see you play with Emmie. Come:—now, now, child, do you want to bring on another attack of bleeding?" said he with assumed anger, belied by the twinkle in his mild old eyes.

Thus adjured, Emmie brought round the board, opened it, and sitting opposite to Chantrey, began arranging her men. Her face was flushed, and she preserved an untoward silence; but, never-

theless, she began to throw and make abstracted moves.

There was but one dice-box; and as they passed it from one to the other, her fingers sometimes touched David's; a subtle happiness was stealing and thrilling through his veins; simple man, he was intoxicated by the hour, and was too enchanted to reason.

"What is the girl dreaming of?" moaned old Wertley, who was superintending them from under the bedclothes. "Why, you should have made a point!"

At this moment, David, yielding to an irresistible temptation, took a glance up at her face, and saw that burning flush there still; but whether it was a flush of anger or bashfulness was beyond his spelling-book knowledge of woman's nature. One thing was clear, it was not pleasure, for two bright tears were on her eyelashes; before he could see his course, she laid down the box and went hastily to her own room, shutting the door behind her.

Once more Chantrey felt the floor scorch his

feet. Looking at his watch, he made the truthful excuse of important business; and to divert the old man's comments from his daughter's conduct, he told what that business was—a call upon his patron, Sir Hugh Rowly.

Having effected his escape, he proceeded slowly downstairs; and indignant with himself, he recorded a silent vow.

“Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?” said Benhadad; and he did it. Chantrey, in his high-wrought gallantry, had fancied himself incapable of encroaching upon her in her humiliation; and he had just now joined in her persecution, and driven her to bay under his own roof. He now made a vow that whilst she remained beneath it he would neither see nor speak to her again. *He did both*; but he was not to blame.

As he reached the hall, there fell a smart double-knock upon the hall-door. They had not many visitors out here in the wilderness, and he stood in the hall to consider who it might be, in the same irrational spirit which leads us to dally

with the seal of a letter before breaking it. His father's gray head emerged cautiously from his den, with an expression of speculative curiosity; and old Ben's popped out tremulously from his little room situate on the kitchen-landing.

"Who the deuce can that be!" whispered Mr. Chantrey; "Sir Hugh—eh?"

"I daresay 'tis Rawson," said Chantrey, crossing the hall and opening the door. He found himself confronted by John Wayre.

At sight of him Chantrey felt a certain forgiving glow, which almost tempted him to hold out his hand at a venture; but he had been long enough in the world to mistrust these little impulses of generosity which place one at such disadvantage; he happily restrained himself: because he had forgiven John Wayre, it did not follow that John Wayre had forgiven him.

The barrister bowed rather coldly, and kept his distance; he said he had just heard of the illness of Mr. Wertley, and that he called to inquire. Chantrey, with much civility, gave him a favourable account.

“Your father and Miss Wertley are entirely to themselves ; will you not walk upstairs?”

“My sister here !” said Mr. Wayre in frigid surprise.

“She shall be as safe from intrusion as in her own home,” said Chantrey. “I am sorry to say your father cannot be removed for a few days, and Miss Wertley cannot leave his side ; but their necessary residence in this house shall never be considered by me as a claim to further acquaintance.”

“I should like to see my sister, certainly,” said Wayre, relaxing a little. “This bell will, I believe, summon the servant?”

“I will send Miss Wertley’s maid to you, if you wish,” said Chantrey ; “but I would take it as a favour, Mr. Wayre, if you would come in. You in no way commit yourself by coming in, and I shall be from home all day.”

Wayre came in, and took off his hat in the hall ; then he spoke up, looking his late antagonist unflinchingly in the face.

“I’m not very generous, Mr. Chantrey ; and

after what has passed between us, you will feel that acquaintance is quite out of the question; still I wish to acknowledge your kindness to my relatives; and your subsequent conduct towards me has at least wiped out the old score. There need be no enmity, though there cannot be acquaintance."

"That is all I wish or expect," said David; "we must every one of us bow to the force of circumstances."

He led the barrister to the foot of the stairs, and, with a gentlemanly tact, he accompanied him no farther. Having directed him where to find the door, he put on his hat, and was just taking his departure—he had his hand on the hall-door—when his father called to him; and coming from his room in a rapture of amazement, he clapped his hand on his son's shoulder:

"By ——, I'll never witness any thing so fine again! Beautiful Christian temper!—little lawyer meek and mild!—ha, ha, ha! Egad, I wouldn't wonder if a life-long friendship were to spring from the horsewhipping."

"Hush, governor; he'll hear. He has behaved well all through—far better than I."

"Behaved!—I never saw such behaviour; it beggars all praise—ha, ha, ha!—little lawyer meek and mild! So the score is wiped out; he means to say, 'Thank ye, sir; my back is quite well.'"

"Hush, governor; come into your room, where we can't be heard."

David hastily entered the little parlour, followed by his father, and he closed the door.

It was the chamber the old man occupied the whole day, from meal-time to meal-time. Dusty, crowded, and cheerless, it seemed the very retreat of some ruined wifeless man contending with age and neglect, who neither respected himself nor any one else in the world.

"The fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf."

"Now, governor, have your laugh out; then I'll tell you something about Mr. Wayre which will make you respect him."

“Respect is no word for it. He looked devilish closely at your coat, eh?” laughed the old scoffer.

“I’ve made him reparation since, and I apologised to him. I’ve seen no want of pluck in him, and you’d make a dangerous mistake to reckon too much on his meekness. I’m going to see Sir Hugh, governor, on my business; and it’s about time, you’ll admit; but I’ll tell you something of Wayre which I’d be proud if it could be told of me.”

He here told about the manly transfer of the Highgate property in favour of Miss Wertley, which has already, we hope, earned the reader’s respect for Mr. Wayre.

Old Chantrey’s mockery dropped from him; he grew quite grave and interested at the recital.

“Why the deuce did not you tell me this before?”

“To what purpose?”

“To the purpose of the lady in the house, sir. You’re not such a fool as I thought, Davy. I apologise for roasting you about the love-letter.

Egad, I'd as soon laugh at bank-notes. Only don't be shy now you've got the chance."

"I have not; I've lost it long ago, governor. She very naturally objects to the company of a man who assaulted her brother."

"So you've been carrying your sighs and your moans upstairs; that's right; helping her to nurse Liz. A very pretty lover's game, my lad; and a winning game."

"Anyhow, she has taken my visit ill, and I shall not intrude upon her again. I'll keep my sighs and moans for you."

"Thank ye, thank ye."

"Don't wait dinner for me, governor. I'll be home late."

"Nonsense! Do you think seriously a girl would throw over her lover for her brother?"

"You don't know the tie between them," said David reflectively.

"Tie! If sisterly affection is a tie, female vanity is a cable."

"Well, well, well—don't let us make a fuss, governor," said David, willing to escape the

discussion ; and turning towards the door, he opened it.

“ Shut that door ; I’ve not done with you yet. You told me you had made the amende to her brother ; and Heaven knows he met you with good-temper just now : so that difficulty disappears. If *he* forgives, I think *she* should ; but all you cursed donkeys of lovers put such clouds of romance and mountains of modesty between you and a poor little girl in her teens, when, egad, she’s expecting you to come up to her and clasp your arm round her waist. Don’t make the girl despise you, lad,” said the tempter.

David shrugged his shoulders, feeling it hopeless to argue.

“ I’ll let her alone. It’s not fair, governor, in her present position.”

“ There it is—there it is, d—n it ! When the high-road is before you, why should you try to walk through a stone wall ? Not fair. Who ever succeeded who refused his opportunity ? I tell you a lost chance never forgives you.”

“ Well, father, I’ll give you my reason at once,

and let that end it. I think any advance or intrusion on my part now would be unworthy of a gentleman, and any advantage of her position would be dishonourable. This is not meant as a rebuke to you."

"'Gad, if it was, I'd kick you out of the room."

"For," continued David, "if you knew all the circumstances, you'd agree with me."

"What's to be said to a fellow like this? You sop, you ass! I address you with the utmost good-temper."

"They're not pet names," smiled Davy.

"Well, you talk of honour, and I must meet you on your own ground. Be as punctilious as you think fit. Bow her upstairs and downstairs till you burst your seams. I won't hurry you; but, d—n it, man, you can square your honour with your interest, if you're not a fool."

True, old Jos, say we. Honour is a lock which interest may often pick without injuring a ward; but you must not bungle as you did in that affair of the money on trust. David looked

whim ; yet it was strange that, with such a paramount attraction at home, he did not grudge the moments of absence, especially when he must have felt that the halcyon hour that was granted to him must soon be out. Was he fatigued by his long walk ? was he uncertain as to Sir Hugh's return, and desirous to hover in the neighbourhood of his expectations ?

Was he so considerate as to spare the lady the annoyance of his presence in the house for a day and night, that she might recover from her displeasure ? Mephisto whispers that his pride was hurt ; and, wounded in his self-love by Emmie's rebuff, he went off sulking abroad, like an affronted child.

Be that as it may, he did not return till the afternoon of next day. When he arrived home, after this lengthened absence, during which the hours seemed weeks, he found the hall empty, and the house very still ; and he was seized by a quick suspicion that his honoured guests had left him.

The screen he had placed at the foot of the

stairs was gone; his father's hat—broad-leaved and swathed with crape—was on the hall-table; there were fresh marks of wheels on the gravel. It was quite evident they had gone during his absence. He looked blankly round; and the place, erewhile so transformed to a theatre of endless crisis and excitement, with the change in his fantastic moods became a howling wilderness, fit only for the owls and jackals.

“It is better so,” he said; “now I will attend to my duties;” and thus, feeling the emotions which overpowered him to be unworthy and pusillanimous, he relieved himself by this fleeting record—this idle *fiat* of the voice.

He went to his sister's room and softly opened the door. It was almost dark within, and the nurse sat by the bed in a peculiarly affectionate attitude for one at her hardened time of life. She was, in fact, leaning over the child, and kept softly smoothing back the hair from her forehead.

“She's growing fond of the child,” said David, who stood still within the door.

The nurse did not turn at his entrance, so absorbed was she with her sleeping charge. As he watched, she stooped over the patient and imprinted a kiss on the little noble forehead.

You can measure the warmth of the heart's temperature by the kiss. There is the kiss of aversion, cold as the tip of a swallow's wings in the lake. The kiss of patronage, like a large rain-drop on the cheek, leaving a damp chill: then the heart is at freezing-point. There is the kiss of passion, which roots—the heart is up to fever then; and there is the soft summer-heat of simple compassionate love—a long kind kiss—which you may measure off with the minute-hand of your watch, and note its exact degree. There was something maternal in this nurse's kiss, pressed upon the child's white forehead. She then rose and turned, disclosing the face of Emmie. David retreated hastily, and let her leave the room without disturbance. When she had passed him in the hall, he entered the room again, and gazed on the little sleeping form thoughtfully.

Emmie did not go upstairs; but like one who

felt free of the house, and confident of her welcome, she went downstairs towards the kitchen, on some cooking intent. It pleased David to see that so far she had become domesticated, and that this was probably the result of his forbearance and anxious consideration. If you named the price he would have taken to break up that confidence by intrusion or unmanly advantage, you might name a million of money, and be refused with scorn. He found a happiness and tranquillity in thinking of his success as a host; and as he looked out over his kingdom—the dreary skirt of lawn before the house was like a kingdom to him—he chewed the cud of his satisfaction, listening for her returning footstep. Presently he caught her footfall again, coming up and crossing the hall; it was an easy and confident step he fancied; not the tread of one imprisoned among enemies or strangers.

“What will the house be like when that foot is gone for ever?”

Of a sudden he was rather startled by hearing the tramp of a man’s slippered foot in pursuit of

her; and as he half rose from his seat, he heard his father's voice calling after her:

"Miss Wertley! pardon me; I have been waiting for an opportunity for a word. I won't ask you into my room—it's a sort of ogre's den; but just give me a moment's audience in the hall—that's a good girl."

"Certainly, Mr. Chantrey," she replied good-humouredly, coming down the few stairs she had ascended, and again reaching the hall.

"Egad, I don't quite know how to begin," said the old gentleman; "I am in some sort of an embarrassment, and consequently I have some responsibility on my shoulders."

"What is it, Mr. Chantrey?" said Emma encouragingly.

"Eh? What do you think? It don't become an old man to be bashful; but your pretty little face gives me quite the sensation of a principal in the communication."

"You would give me to understand," said Emma's cheerful voice, "that we are rather troublesome guests, and that we begin to en-

croach upon your kind hospitality. I can assure you we feel it so ; but to-morrow—”

“Not at all—not at all ! I should scarcely know you were in the house. Well, well—you are welcome to make it your home. There now—no mistake there ! Have you heard, Miss Werty, by the way, that my son has had luck ; just going to step into an agency of some hundreds a-year ? You’ve heard of Sir Hugh Rowly, eh ?”

“I’m very pleased to hear it,” said Emma in a lowered tone.

“Egad, my fool Davy might just as well have the tongue of an ox as the shoulders of one. The fellow is afraid to tell you a secret that is too big for him to contain. I found it out ; the nurse-tender found it out ; old Ben smelt the rat. He goes sighing through the house like an *Æolian* harp, letting it out to all but the one that should know it. The fellow’s away off at Sir Hugh’s, so we’ll take pity on him,” he laughed. “In fact, he is so flattering to me as to desire to offer me to you as a father-in-law.”

Before Emma could reply, old Davy sallied

out on them, burning with mortification and shame. He paused, and strove to gulp down his indignation.

“Miss Wertley, there have been scenes enough to pain you. I am not going to make a scene. It never entered into my dreams to make such a statement to you. Had I done so at such a time and place, I should forfeit the name of gentleman.”

Having made this speech with his eyes on the ground, so as not to oppress her in her confusion, he strode back again and closed the door behind him.

Humiliated and impatient of his false position, David stood by the window, expecting every moment his father to enter the room to bully and reproach him. But whether the well-meaning old autocrat was somewhat staggered by his son's outraged apparition, when he understood that the youth was many miles away, and was standing petrified by his defeat where David had left him, or whether he had retired in wrath to his den, David was unable to decide. His whole sense

of hearing during the first moments had been concentrated upon the light sound of Emma's steps, which to a sensitive lover's ear uttered speech. She seemed to go up slowly, misgivingly, reproachfully, as if all the confidence in his scrupulous faith and honour, which he had been so carefully building up since she came, had been rudely levelled.

"Davy," said a small voice like the bleat of a sick lamb. He looked round and saw his little sister, half sitting up, her haggard little head upturned to the ceiling, as if she expected to see his face on a level with the cornice.

With a sudden pang of self-reproach, he came over to the bedside and supported her slim figure by his arm.

"Poor old woman," said he, tenderly rubbing his rough cheek against hers, "Davy has been neglecting her this long, long time. Davy has been a brute, thinking of nobody but his great ugly self, and forgetting the little old woman who dotes on him. How is the pain in old Davy's head?"

"All gone!" she said, with a little pale smile. "Take me up, old Davy, and show me the green, green fields! the green, green fields! Take me up."

He hesitated a moment; then stripping off his coat, he wrapped it around the poor little mite, who was lost in its enormous collar and cuffs, the little wan death's-head peeping above them. He then carried her over to the window and showed her the green, green fields—that is to say, the strip of green aforesaid, which was as dismal as a graveyard this cloudy day, without being nearly as verdant. Poor Liz peeped out dazzled and bewildered, but seemed to see nothing but the broad and painful glare of daylight. She presently hid her face from it and laid her heavy head on her brother's shoulder, who began walking up and down the room with her, whistling softly, till she fell soundly asleep again. Then he laid her very softly on her bed, still lost in the folds of his coat, and kissing her forehead twice, and twice tenderly again, he muttered:

“My own poor little woman! I’ll never desert her again; all my heart shall be hers whilst God leaves her with me.”

The mother has overshadowed him again. We must believe it, or whence this sudden reaction from agitation and anger to womanly tenderness? Whether that little woman is incarnate in her great son, or inlignate in yon old deal chair or yon stained nursery-table, or has diffused her essence through the small bedstead, so as to clasp her pining darling,—one thing is certain, she is here, around and about her offspring. She haunted Davy that whole day, from the moment that she woke up Lizzy to comfort and calm him, till he lay down to sleep himself. Else how was it that at dinner-time he bore his father’s rough displeasure so patiently—this fiery old Davy, with his answer and his challenge to all comers? Else how was it that he fretted no more, and seemed to put Emma out from his thoughts? sitting with Lizzy, and whistling for her calm old tunes, which were like anodynes to Lizzy’s yeasty little brain; and comforting her about the poor king’s son in

the parable, whom they slew in his father's vineyard.

"I am very sorry for the king's son," she said. "I am very fond of him, Davy; he gave me nice cold grapes, and he sat by my bed. *Don't* let them kill him; I'm *so* sorry—*so* sorry."

And she would stroke Davy's coat with a world of compassion; and as if that was not enough, she would soothe down the bed-post by the hour.

David would still divert her mind, and whistle away at the old anodyne tunes, much to the admiration of the nurse, till the evening fell, and the night fell; and at last the poor mother-bird, we suppose, took his place at the pillow, and let him lie down and go sound asleep.

From henceforth David became a passive medium to the influences of the motherly ghost. Laugh at us who may, we shall hold to the phrase and the belief. He did not, indeed, wholly forget the pressing business of life; he wrote a dignified letter, for instance, to his patron, Sir Hugh, in which he begged to remind him that he had given up a lucrative employment,

on which his livelihood depended, upon Sir Hugh's express promise; that he had already entered upon his new engagement, by work done and money received; that he had made two calls upon him, and was surprised to find there was neither message nor communication addressed to him; therefore he respectfully requested an immediate reply. This, it must be acknowledged, was a step towards returning sanity; and to this letter he awaited an answer. He also, through Miss Wertley's maid, made kind inquiries about old Mr. Wertley, who was still unable to be moved. This conduct was proper and decorous; but, saving the time which he spent at meals in company with his offended father, he devoted all his time to poor Lizzy, watching maternally by her bedside.

Lizzy began to occupy herself too much with certain visionary terrors and griefs. She was visited by oppressive notions of how the Sower used to stride by her window, from right to left, on the wind, with outspread palm—away—away; and pass suddenly again, still from right to left, throwing his shadow on the ceiling. Then, at

night, not content with her own little troubled affairs, she must bemoan the plight of Simon Peter, who it seemed came to sob under her window, haunted by that crowing of the cock ; again she was racked with childish grief as she witnessed the murder of the king's son in his father's vineyard—which was perpetrated with monstrous flaming clubs, that struck, but made no noise. If left to herself, her little burdened brain was caught and whirled away by these fantasies. The old nurse-tender could not deal with them. Poor Lizzy seemed continually oppressed by agonies of compassion for something or somebody ; this was her prevailing notion. She would fix her bright eyes upon David's great towering head as he stooped over, till presently her tears brimmed up.

Poor old Davy ! the pain—the pain. And he must lay his head on the quilt, and hold the little saucer of vinegar within her reach, that she might steep his forehead for him with profound and doting pity. Alas, the pain was still within her own little tossed head !

David was convinced that these fancies exer-

cised a morbid influence on the child's brain; he observed that the fever always rose and the pulse fluttered when they had possession of her; so he used to invent many little fond diversions which caught her attention, and made her forget her pain.

If the sun were shining, he used to take the small looking-glass from its nail, and turning it about, produce a will-o'-wisp upon the ceiling, which the heavy eyes of the child followed with dull wonder. He used to play cat's-cradle with her, taking off the changeful little network from her bits of hands, and carefully replacing its altered form.

He would set her little musical-box going for her under her pillow, and keep grotesque time to the simple airs it played, attracting on himself continually the child's solemn stare. He cut her out shapes from coloured paper and gold and silver leaf; shapes like nothing that ever existed, but satisfying to the child, simply by their brightness and vivid hue. He had a low and flute-like whistle which exercised a spell over Lizzy, and to

which she continually raised and dropped her hands on the coverlid, with a sort of attempt at keeping time. Finally, there was an uncouth snatch he had picked up somewhere, with neither meaning nor good manners in its rhymes, but which at intervals delighted the child. Ladies, and persons of fastidious taste, may be offended with the rude burden, or read it with a disdainful smile; but David, our minstrel, did not sing for them. Well-meaning folk might have suggested to him a pretty verse from the Olney Hymns, or a simple one from Dr. Watts; but David knew his auditor better than these enlightened critics; and if he could only win a laugh from her, and soothe her pain for an hour, he did not regard the public taste and empty nut-shell. I too, as a narrator of truth, am bound to defy it.

He used to sing this objectionable catch standing in her sight at the foot of her bed, slowly rolling his shoulders, and drowsily waving his hands with an indescribable swagger and sway, which concentrated Lizzy's attention. She used to strive to follow the words, so infectious were

they, with a feeble treble which sounded far away, and mimic the motions of the singer's hands.

These were the words, and this the music of the song, to be sung *ad libitum*—

“ And we'll kindle up a fire,
And we'll call a man a liar,
Aboo, aboo, aboo, aboo, aboo !”

This snatch was so popular, such an immense success whilst it lasted, that the duet used to go on for hours, sometimes sinking to murmurs, and sometimes rising to howls, till beads of perspiration would stand on David's forehead with the pumping and the rolling requisite for its proper performance. By these devices he laid the feverish fancies, and soothed the little sufferer. By detailing them we frankly hold him up to ridicule, and proclaim him an unmitigated ass ; but there was an occasional auditor besides the child, whom old Davy little dreamt was within earshot ; and she often listened to and watched these grotesque manifestations with moistened eyes, whatever was the pathos she saw in what awakens nothing but ridicule in us.

The nurse used to bring down Emmie to the hall, and leave the door slightly ajar, that she might look in and see the poor gentleman at his innocent drolleries. Strange to say, this girl, with her quick sense of humour, saw no absurdity in the scenes, but often left the hall with wet eyelids.

David had had a succession of broken nights, and he began to sicken for sleep. It was on a Friday night; he had left all well with Lizzy; and he retired to his room with a giddy weariness.

David fell into a sound sleep. He was of that strong plethoric temperament that seldom dreams. Meagre ill-thriven folk are visionaries in their sleep; but he slept the slumber of sound flesh and blood. It was remarkable, then, that towards the morning hours a dream distinctly shaped itself in his mind, and of a foolish commonplace nature, in sooth. He was in the auction-room, it appeared, in which he lately bought his trifles in the upholstery line for Emmie's room, and the auctioneer was unusually energetic. Tap—tap went his ham-

mer, knocking down the choicest goods before Davy could nod his head. There were vases; there were novels, labelled with great gold letters *A Reed in the Wind*. Tap, tap! They went to the first bidder for the lowest price, before Davy could buy them in; and the scene suddenly changed. There was a gate he must leap; but rattle, rattle went the gate, and it was so unsteady, that he dared not make his spring; and the scene changed to a Punchinello-show, and Punch was rapping his victim's head viciously against the front of the box. Punch looked marvellously like the Major; and the poor victim, whose head resounded with the knocks, was wondrously like his ill-used valet. Knock, knock, knock! and low cries—"Mr. Chantrey! Mr. Chantrey!" David sprung up to rescue the wretched puppet, and discovered, when well awake, that some one had been knocking at his door all this time, and that a hushed voice had been calling his name.

"Going!" he said; and springing from his bed, he pulled on his trousers, threw a dressing-gown round his shoulders, and thrust his feet into

slippers. Then he went to the door in haste and opened it.

An apparition, well calculated to startle a lusty gentleman at the small hours of the night, met his astonished gaze. There stood a young lady, white as a ghost, with streaks of blood on her bosom and sleeves, holding up a flaring candle.

“Miss Wertley!” exclaimed David, still confused by sleep, “what is the matter? Are you hurt?”

She told him in breathless agitation that her father was taken very ill again; that the bleeding had again commenced, and all her efforts failed to staunch it. Finally, she entreated him, quite piteously, to come up and see what could be done.

Without a word he ran up hastily before her, and found Mr. Wertley seated in the arm-chair by the fire, his head dropped feebly back. He was bleeding copiously from the nostrils, and looked quite ghastly. The first thing that David did was to lift him back to his bed; and when he had hastily propped up his head with a bolster and

pillows, he calmly pursued the simple directions of the doctor, and with a little perseverance the dangerous symptom disappeared.

During his exertions David was self-possessed and calm; but pressing to his side stood Emmie, in a suppressed fever of excitement, her hand continually touching his as she endeavoured to assist him, and her anxious whisper at frequent intervals in his ear: "Do you think he is better? Does it seem to lessen?" or, "You don't think he's in danger?" At length David said quietly, "The bleeding has stopped."

"Thank God!" she murmured. "Come aside, Mr. Chantrey, for a moment. I must tell you how it happened." He bowed with a distant courtesy and followed her to the fire. He then learned that poor old Wertley, having found himself rather vivacious, and having become very tired of his bed, proposed that he should get up and sit at the fire. Emmie rather injudiciously opposed him, instead of allowing the proposition to pass unnoticed; and the perverse old gentleman grew determined and got up. She was then

obliged to assist him to the arm-chair; and he grew very excited and talkative, in the endeavour to illustrate to her that he was rational and right; but he was stopped in the midst by the attack.

David gave her a few quiet directions as to treatment, which he had received from the doctor—a glass of wine every two hours, and perfect quiet. He then bade her good-night with cold respect.

“Pray stay with me a little; I am so nervous,” said Emmie, with downcast eyes.

He could not refuse; but he concealed from her his willing eagerness as he sat down in silence on the other side of the bed. She pressed on him a glass of wine, and offered him a faltering apology for her troublesome request; so that he could not refrain from a kind and reassuring reply.

She then took her seat by the fire, her figure half-turned from him, and the dim glow of the embers lacing, as it were, her light dress and pretty sad profile with red. There she sat patiently till the first cock crew, and till the bleak light of morning entered keener and more keen,

touching her hair and shoulder with its blue. Then came the twittering of the birds; and she sat there patiently still. A woman's patience in a sick-room, her power of sleepless vigil, is marvellous to me. A woman can wake and watch, when the strongest man must sleep.

David had had broken nights of late, and this cause, combined with the chill of the hour, irresistibly acted upon his eyelids; they drooped before he was aware, and his head nodded heavily forward; in fact he finished out his night's sleep on the chair, dropping off about an hour after he had taken his post. When he awoke, Emmie sat motionless at the fire; but he found himself strangely comfortable and warm; somebody had laid over him a cloak and rug during the night, and placed a pillow under his head, and there was none to have done it but one.

He rose quietly, and she turned her head and whispered her thanks for his kindness; but her eyes were still downcast as she spoke. He left the room quietly, promising, in a low voice, that he would immediately go for the doctor; and having

looked in to his little sister, and found that she had slept all the night through, he completed his dressing, put on his coat and hat, and went forth on his errand unbreakfasted.

In about an hour he returned with the doctor, who gave a not unfavourable opinion of Mr. Wertley's case, and was very emphatic in his approval of David's promptitude and correct treatment. He assured Miss Wertley that it had probably saved her father's life. After this testimony, in which Miss Wertley seemed to concur, the doctor came down the half-flight of stairs to David, who awaited him at the door of Lizzy's room.

"The child is better, sir, I am happy to say," whispered David, leading the doctor in, and over to his sister's bed.

But the doctor was of a different opinion. The skill of the practitioner was quite sufficient to recognise in the child's continued sleep one of the last stages of her disease, and he broke the news to poor Davy with what delicacy he could command. Of course he promised to send up some

medicines, very excusably mingling business with sympathy.

“Will she suffer much pain?” said David, in the hard low voice of man striving against emotion.

“She will die, sir, as a feather falls to the earth,” said the doctor, suggesting the motion with his hand. With these words he took his departure.

With compressed lips and wet eyes David heavily reëntered the room, and sat by the bed to watch the feather fall.

He was filled with a sorrowful remorse as he looked back on his selfish sufferings, which blinded him to the symptoms of the child's decline. He had seen the glad green leaf fading into yellow, and the yellow shrivelling into brown, and it might have drifted away on the wind before he marked the changes.

Lizzy awoke from her stupor about five o'clock in the afternoon, and for an hour or so lay quietly on her back, with her eyes heavily fixed on vacancy. During that time Davy exhausted his ingenuity in

devising means to attract her attention ; but the child's hearing and sight seemed both affected. Yet was she so marvellously patient and content to lie there, that it seemed as if she saw and heard something in the shadows of the room that he could not see or hear. About eight o'clock it was almost dark. The nurse-tender lit a sick-lamp ; and with David's leave she retired into the little room adjoining to take some sleep. Davy, then, and his lambkin were left alone, unless, indeed, there were a third that held the child's intent gaze so long. The sentiment of a mother's spirit watching over her orphan child is a trite one, and we would convey something more. The look in that child's eyes would have induced you to turn round, expecting to see some motionless watcher in the shadows of the room. David was not superstitious, but he forgot himself more than once, and gazed hard in the direction which his sister's eyes took.

About half-past eight her head rolled on the pillow once or twice.

"Davy," she said, "tell me ; I forget."

He took up her musical-box and wound it up

for her ; and he was delighted to observe that, as her attention was attracted by the music, her eyes lost their fixity. She smiled and patted his hand ; it was evident the lethargy was leaving her senses. But when the airs ceased with that slow and melancholy break in the midst of a bar peculiar to the little instrument, she muttered helplessly again :

“Tell me ; I forget.”

David began to hope he had caught her attention, and he resolved to hold it. Hitherto, her little spirit seemed drifting away out of his reach ; he did not know whither or how to stretch to it. He summoned to his aid, with anxious haste, all those little grotesque diversions, with their common nursery associations, which might, as it were, like little grapnels, hold her thoughts to earth. She listened for a while, drowsily attracted by his efforts ; but presently her lips began to mutter rapidly and she seemed wholly preoccupied. She was drifting away from him again ; he put his ear close to her lips to catch her words, and then he perceived that her mind was running upon one

of those Bible-stories which had such fascination for her.

“Poor little child, wandering through Jooslem all night long; and the shouts, and the spears, and the soldiers; she wanted—tell me; I forget.”

“She wanted to see the crucifixion,” murmured David, yielding to the child’s mood, whilst a cold awe stole over him.

“And ‘Jesus’ blessing was on her hair, ever since he put her on his knee and laid his hand on it. I forget,” she said, helplessly pausing again.

“The crowd frightened her, and the soldiers trampled on her, till she got to the hill and she saw Jesus on the cross.”

“He wouldn’t look,” wailed Lizzy, fixing her eyes upon the dim ceiling; “he wouldn’t look, he wouldn’t look! Touch him!” she cried with starting tears.

David paused alarmed, and as Liz became silent too, he thought the story was passing from her memory, and that it was well to let it go. He watched her intently for about half-an-hour,

and then her lips began twitching, and her brows contracted, as if she were suffering from the habitual headache.

“He wouldn’t look,” she sobbed; “he is in such pain; they are giving him the vinegar—nice cold vinegar; they put the sponge to his mouth. Davy, why, why won’t they put it to his forehead? this pain, pain, pain! up, up! higher, to his poor bleeding forehead,” sobbed Liz in a little agony of compassion: “naughty soldiers! I’ll do it! Lift me! oh!”

David put his arm beneath her shoulders, and his broad hand under her tossed little head, and he gently lifted her. The act seemed to satisfy the child; her voice changed and sunk to a whisper, and her eyelids began to close.

“Mamma touched him; he is seeing me.”

These were the last words Lizzy spoke; a strange expressionless look came upon her face, the eyeballs seemed slowly turning up, and David, in great alarm, called to the nurse. One came hastily from behind him and passed round to the other side of the little bed. It was Emmie, who

had just come in time to lay the little figure down fair and straight, and close the waxen lids with a woman's loving touch. When she had drawn the coverlid smooth, she looked in David's face with streaming eyes, and stretched out her hand to him over the small remains.

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION.

Two left Chantrey's house on the same day. Old Wertley in his easy carriage for his own home; there to recover his strength and his good temper on good diet and under loving care. Lizzy was borne away in her little black coffin to the Greenwich churchyard; there to moulder beside her mother, or, as we like better to say, to sleep. David and his father and old Ben attended the funeral. We cannot say that old Chantrey exhibited much feeling; but was it an occasion for any? Who could have wished the child to live? What David felt, he concealed; and we have no wish to make stock of his grief. If the reader care to step aside some day and look within the churchyard-rails west, nearly opposite the church-porch, he will see the inscription engraved upon

the stone, setting forth some pretty commonplace sentiments about a gifted mother and her daft child, which certainly will not move him much; to David they were eloquent, and contained the story of a life.

About a week after these events, his house was honoured by a visit from Sir Hugh, who, like a thoughtless rich man, never dreamt of an apology for the lengthened delay, having never conceived that any inconvenience could have resulted from it. He entered with a most hardened smile and heartless complacency; talking of indifferent matters, and playfully criticising the unbusiness-like trim of Davy's room, for the first ten minutes after his entrance. Having thus in his happy thoughtlessness tortured our friend with suspense, at length he said that he was come to demand his honest man, as the devil comes for his wizard. He hoped that David could enter upon his duties at once; he required no security, and had given all needful directions; the arrival of the new agent was expected, and he was to consider himself formally installed.

After this stroke of good fortune, David was justified, no doubt, in improving upon Emmie's hearty reconciliation to him. One day he told his love with such little regard for dramatic effect, that it does not suit our purpose to detail the scene, or we could acquaint the reader, as matter for laughter, with the outspoken words of David, when he exclaimed: "I have loved you almost since the first day I saw you: then I could give no reason for it; but now I know why. I have a sort of faith, Miss Wertley, that I can make you happy, or I shouldn't venture to offer myself as your husband. How I am to make myself worthy of you, I do not know; but I have a blind faith that I can and will." We might then, having opened this marmalade-pot, proceed to recount how Emmie tortured him by her equivocal silence and her torturing equivocations; and at length, when he vigorously pressed for an answer, her arch recommendation to him that he should be content with his blind faith; which remark, accompanied as it was by a smile, of course meant yes.

In due time they were married; and they all went to reside at David's house on the estate. Old Mr. Wertley accompanied them to share their home, bringing with him his rare old furniture, his quips and his jibes, and his mild perversity. Old Chantrey and his clerk abode still in the old house at Hampstead. Since then poor Ben has gone to join his 'Melia, performing the last transition in his easy-chair in the May-day sunshine.

One fact it would be unjust to David if we did not state emphatically here, and our emphasis is one of cold worldly surprise: he utterly refused to take Emmie's fortune when she gave him her hand; and that snug little property at Highgate, which has figured quite briskly in our foregoing narrative, passes again into the hands of its too generous owner John Wayre. This act seemed to satisfy his conscience in respect to the monstrous debt with which he had voluntarily burdened himself—he paid no more instalments. What was the consequence of this prosperity to the barrister? Why, he fixed the marriage-day with Mrs. Blenheim in a manner at once friendly and business-

like; and Milly and he were married with great pomp, considering the situation of their residence and their worldly circumstances. Miss Brown paid for the breakfast, and Mrs. Blenheim presided, and John made a speech, and Milly behaved with unexampled nerve: she had contemplated such an occasion, heaven knows, long enough. They have lived happily ever since; and I believe I once saw the barrister in court; he was seated on a secluded bench eating an orange in utter idleness. He is a literary man, and tomahawks books daily; his wife has foresworn society, lives in her nursery, and seems to have a genius for domesticity, as many little Bohemians have, if they only had the chance.

Major de Lindesey grew fond of Castle Craigh, and became a man of mark in the county. Being a regular attendant at kirk, he was universally visited by the ladies; and having hospitable tastes, he was a favourite with the gentlemen. In the late elections he presented himself as a candidate for the county; and after a spirited contest, was defeated with considerable loss. In a widely dif-

ferent field, I believe, he lately canvassed for immortality; having, as I learned by the advertisements, brought out a neat volume of poems under the best publishing auspices. I may add, having had a peep at them, that it is handsomely got up in green and gold, and *I hold it very cheap*. He led to the altar, some years ago, the daughter of a neighbouring laird, and has made her, I understand, a most excellent husband. A man of his character has generally within him fine domestic possibilities; selfishness and vanity are bridle-reins upon his neck, which a woman with a light hand can manage with facility. Some domestic troubles indeed darkened for a time his prosperous career; his father Lord de Lindesey, a prodigal old dotard, hung upon his flanks for several years, and haunted him as a maudlin phantom, appearing at wrong moments, and wounding him with reproach and sarcasm.

It will be remembered that the Major entered into a liberal arrangement with his father, by which he was to receive the castle, its barren whins and timber; and in return he was to de-

liver the old peer from his creditors and allow him an annuity. The Major honourably acquitted himself of his part of the conditions, even under pressure and difficulty; not so his father. This pestilent old man haunted the Major. He used to squander his money at a certain tavern in the neighbouring town, in the bar-room of which he was known, and is known to this day, as "the Earl." There, the king of his company and a victim to all the old pikes, who flattered him, fleeced him, and laughed at him, he would indulge the ambition of dotage, boasting of his lineage, quoting Sir Walter Scott, and swearing in falsetto. I have seen him myself repeatedly in the tap-room chair, encouraged by his audience to make drunken orations. A little crook-kneed, hoary daddy, with a monstrous white beard and moustache; there he stood, tottering, without dignity, sense, or education, talking English with the broadest lowland *patois*. As an humble com-moner I felt somewhat conceited and elate; it was a very gratifying sight.

This poor old dotard, then, used to pay his

son irregular visits, which we might more properly term raids. He used to come ambling down the approach on an old gray horse, singularly attired. On his head a hat of monstrous brim; his stooped and shrunken figure ambushed behind his beard; and his hungry gray eyes fixed before him on the castle. His dutiful son generally contrived to have warning, and to be out of the way on these occasions; but the paternal heart was proof against this unnatural conduct, and the paternal pride took no wound. Into the courtyard jogged the old gentleman, like a vulture perched upon a carcass; and aided perhaps by a stable-boy, subdued by the superstition which hedges a title, he would slide down from the saddle with trembling hams, and enter the house by the back-door. If he did not receive assistance in money, he pillaged the premises of any thing within reach of his rapacious claws. His velveteen shooting-jacket, which hung in wrinkles about him, was endowed with most capacious pockets, and into them he has been known to cram slices of bacon, wedges of bannock, crocks of pickles, and such

sundries, muttering as he did so, "I have mair need o' them than Wattie." Ballasted thus with pockets stuffed like panniers, he would jog home to town again, his hungry gray eyes riveted on vacancy.

The Major grew very sensitive at length. These disgraceful inroads became rather too frequent, and were noted by all his neighbours. Nothing could be more scandalous and disreputable than the existence of such a tie, and the Major resolved to sever it. The next time poor old Anchises was seen at the gate, the house was barricaded and the gate of the courtyard shut, whilst the labourers and servants had strict directions to offer him no help or information. The Major calmly listened to the old gentleman's repeated summons, to the loud rappings of his whip-handle against the door, and finally to his passionate screams for admittance into his "ain auld hame." This time Anchises was obliged to jog back the way he came with empty pockets, and find his dinner elsewhere.

For some months after this resolute, if unfilial,

conduct of the Major, the grizzly phantom was laid, and he flattered himself that he would be spared from further incursions. One evening he gave a great dinner to the gentry round. The ladies had gone upstairs, and the gentlemen sat below over the mellow old claret, which this many a year has followed Astræa from the earth; the Major was talking sonorous politics, and, still talking, had risen from his chair to decant another bottle, when, lo you! what happened? From behind the screen crept a little bent figure, dripping with rain, and took the Major's vacant seat. Cluck, cluck, cluck! went the bottle in the Major's hand; and still he retained the ear of the company with his sonorous strictures upon the Cabinet Ministers, pleased with the dead silence that reigned. Since ever the Major had contemplated a seat in Parliament, he had contracted the habit of making speeches at the dinner-table, especially when under the genial glow of wine. Having filled the claret-jug, and still keeping the ear of the house, he was about to place it on the table in front of him and regain his seat, when he

beheld the apparition of the old lord once more installed in the master's chair, and drinking a bumper of port in palsied triumph.

“ Drink, gentlemen ; drink till ye be fou ! I laid that wine down wi’ my ain han’ thirty years syne.” He finished his glass with an abortive smack, and the red wine trickled down his snow-white beard.

The Major stood petrified with the claret-jug in his hand, whilst Anchises filled his glass again with port-wine, which was nearest. His hand shook so, he splashed the liquid round.

“ When I was layin’ down this wine, gentlemen, Wattie used to follow me up and down the cellar wi’ a gumption mair than human ; he kenned well that he’d be drinking it to-day ; but gin I had kenned it, I’d have knocked the bottles by the neck.”

All this in a loud shrill voice. Major de Lindsey apologised in a low voice to his astonished company ; and preferring to endure the humiliation for some minutes longer rather than face the scandalous scene of having his father dragged

forcibly out of the room, he set a chair for himself at the opposite side of the chimney-piece and took his seat in angry consternation. Meantime old Anchises, growing accustomed to the glare and to his dignity, cackled on to the company, some of whom he had once known.

“He’s a sharp chiel, Wattie, gentlemen, and makes a lang bargain; but I thought I’d gie him a wipe at last. ’Twas a fashious job to pit the auld lord out o’ his castle. The great Sir Walter, my friend, warned me o’ it all. I mind the night, gentlemen, he took the messan dogie o’ his knee. ‘Wattie,’ said he, ‘which will ye hae, a croon to-night or a poun’ on Christmas-day?’ ‘Gie me twa poun’,’ said the laddie, ‘and I’ll bide twa Christmas-days.’ ‘Hech, hech, hech!’ Said my friend to me, ‘Here’s a young sleuth-hound that’ll rin by his nose, my lord. Skelp the tricks out o’ him, and he’ll rin doun royal game.’ He spoke sair sooth; the ill-bred tyke has run doun his ain feyther.”

“Gentlemen,” said the Major, interrupting, “will you join the ladies? I shall follow you soon.”

“Hout! fie! sit to your glasses; I’ll gie ye anither bottle. Don’t ye mind Wattie; the sooth bourd is nae bourd,* gentlemen. Hech, hech, hech! Look at him!” He stretched his chappy old finger at the Major. “Wad ye e’er think he counts kin wi’ four earls?—a man who would pit his feyther on a pittance, and shut the doors o’ his house in his feyther’s face!”

The gentlemen all rose at the persecuted Major’s suggestion, and were proceeding to the door, when father Anchises started up, elf-like and shrill.

“Bide a wee, gentlemen, till I tell you what he is.—Dinna look proud at me, Wattie; scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings; and so did ye when ye sneaked out o’ the service as soon as your regiment was ordered out, lest ye might get a bullet in your lang sandy pate.”

This last thrust was past all sufferance. The guests went upstairs to the ladies with scandalised faces; and the Major—shocking to state—had to carry old Anchises downstairs in his arms, like

* *i. e.* “the true joke is no joke.”

Æneas of old ; but there was less devotion in the act, far less devotion. The sequel to these events I will not relate on my own responsibility ; but I have heard some idle legend that the poor old lord was thrust violently out into the rain ; that, kneeling on the wet paving-stones, he cursed his son in the broadest Scotch ; and that he was seen some miles away, riding, with doleful bent back and uncovered gray head, towards a country churchyard. Certain it is that he died obscurely not long after, from the combined effects of intemperance and deserved neglect.

For some months the Major's social position was injured ; but now he is flourishing like a green bay-tree.

THE END.

LONDON :

ROBSON AND SON, GREAT NORTHERN PRINTING WORKS,
PANCRAS ROAD, N. W.

